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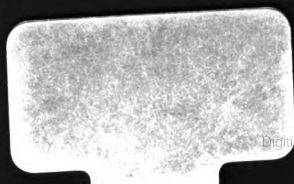
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**'Growth in the
knowledge of
our Lord',
meditations,
adapted by a ...**

**Charles Michel A.
de Brandt**



"Growth in the knowledge of our Lord."

"Growth in the knowledge of our Lord."

MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR,
EXCLUSIVE OF THOSE FOR EACH FESTIVAL, DAY OF RETREAT,
ETC.

Adapted from the French Original
OF THE
ABBÉ DE BRANDT,
BY A "DAUGHTER OF THE CROSS".

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P R A Y E R S.

OUR Father, Who art in Heaven ; hallowed be Thy Name ; Thy kingdom come ; Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread ; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us ; and lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil. Amen.

HAIL Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners ; now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me ;
Body of Christ, save me ;
Blood of Christ, inebriate me ;
Water from the Side of Christ, wash me ;
Passion of Christ, strengthen me ;
O Good Jesus, hear me ;
Within Thy Wounds hide me ;
Suffer me not to be separated from Thee ;
From the malignant enemy, defend me ;

In the hour of my death, call me ; and bid me come to Thee, that with Thy Angels and Saints I may praise Thee, for all eternity. Amen.

O God, Who didst teach the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that we may, by the gifts of the same Spirit, be always truly wise, and ever rejoice in His consolation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TAKE, O Lord, and receive my memory, my understanding, my whole will : all that I have, all that I am I give to Thee, to be made use of, according to Thy good pleasure. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace : with these I am rich enough.

O JESUS, living in Mary, come Thou and live in my soul ;—by Thy Spirit of Holiness,—in the fulness of Thy Strength,—in the perfection of Thy Virtues,—in the power of Thy Truth,—and by communicating to me Thy mysterious Graces. Deliver me from all the enemies of my salvation ; and govern me by Thy Spirit, to the glory of Thy Father. Amen.

O LOVING Jesus ! open Thy Sacred Heart to me, show me Its charms, unite me to It for ever : may every breath I draw, every beating of my heart, be so many proofs of my love ; and remind Thee, that I belong entirely to Thee, O Lord. Receive graciously, O my God, the small amount of good I am able to do each day ; so that I may bless Thee in this life, and praise Thee for all eternity. Amen.

O GOD, Who by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, didst prepare a fit habitation for Thy Son, we beseech Thee, that as by the foreseen Death of her same Son, Thou didst preserve her pure from all spot, so Thou wilt likewise grant, that by her intercession we may be made free from sin, and attain unto Thee. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WE fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God ; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

MEDITATIONS.

Seventh Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

A Tree is known by its fruits.

Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and an evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit.—S. MATT. VII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus Christ preaching His Sermon on the Mount ; He puts this question to His hearers :
Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ?

II. PRELUDE.

Help us, O God, to remember that by the fruit which our lives bring forth, Thou wilt hereafter judge us ; and how unwise it is to seek to deceive Thee, by a feigned appearance of goodness.

I. POINT.

We must beware of all that is false, and therefore likely to prove pernicious to our souls.

“What we are in God’s sight, that are we, and no more.” In these words Saint Francis shows us the necessity of being resolute in withstanding all flattery, whether from within or from without; and to shun dissimulation. To think to deceive God by false appearances is a delusion, which will bring its victims under the condemnation of those *who receive not the love of the truth, that they may be saved*. Many there are, alas! who answer to the description of the false prophets, mentioned by our Lord. Beneath exterior piety, they conceal the venom of hypocrisy, and their influence is more to be avoided than that of the openly profane; for a hidden snare is far more perilous to us than an evident danger. If we are not on our guard, we shall find that we are easily led into a state of relaxation, with regard to the virtues which are most difficult but most necessary to practise. May we never become inoculated with the false idea, that interior mortification and heartfelt humility are excessive demands on our perseverance: that, in fact, the strain put upon us by strict modesty in guarding our senses, by real detachment from the world, and rigid self-abnegation is, after all, more than we can, or are called upon to endure. To use the simile which our Lord employed: under the assumed sheep’s clothing of plausibility, is hidden the cruel cunning and deceit of the ravening wolf; from ever becoming a prey to which, let us earnestly ask God to deliver us: and to grant us the gift of discernment of spirits.

II. POINT.

We learn to know ourselves by examining our works.

Our Saviour, having warned us against the danger of being seduced by the sophistry of false prophets, presents us with

an infallible method by which to know and judge ourselves. No day in our lives can be utterly barren : at the end of each, the fruits are on the branches—that is, the hours—to be gathered and stored for eternity : God takes possession of the good, and Satan of the bad. Are we able to give to God all the fruit of our labour?—all the fruit of our lips?—He *can* only accept the fruits of justice. If our works are produced through obedience to His holy law, and the commandments of the Church—if they are moulded by the spirit of charity and of humility, and of the many virtues practised by Jesus, His Mother and the Saints—then we may with confidence ask God to accept them. But if, on the contrary, we violate the divine precepts, infringe our rule of life, our sacred engagements as Children of God—as Spouses of His Dear Son—then how is it possible to blind ourselves to the fact that we are bringing forth evil fruit, and are running the risk of being rooted up, as a baneful tree? It is not enough to be planted within the vineyard—to make a fair show of leaves and early blossom : the Divine Husbandman declares that every tree is to be judged of by its fruit, and that *an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, nor a good tree evil fruit. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* Wise shall we be, if we now judge ourselves by a strict examination of our works, so that God may not hereafter condemn us in the Day of His Judgment.

COLLOQUY.

O Lord Jesus, I thank Thee for Thy charity in giving me these most wise and wholesome instructions ; may they influence my life, and cause me to be more careful in examining my works, and in daily judging myself by them. I feel that this practice should tend to make me *more fruitful*

4 SEVENTH WEEK AFTER PENTECOST.—MONDAY.

in every good work, and grow in the knowledge of God. Give me Thy grace to be henceforth more faithful to it. Put me also more upon my guard against those false appearances of good, which might hide from me the truth that "whatever I am in Thy sight, that am I, and no more".

RESOLUTION.

To strive to make the actions of every day and hour really acceptable to God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Seventh Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

Jesus restored sight to the blind.

As Jesus passed from the house of Jairus, there followed Him two blind men, crying out and saying: Have mercy on us, O Son of David.—S. MATT. IX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us picture these two blind men, as they cry aloud after our Lord, and follow Him.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, True Light ! *Who enlightenest every man that cometh unto this world*, make us to understand the way that leads to Thee, and enlighten the eyes of our soul.

I. POINT.

How dangerous the condition of spiritual blindness is.

I am come a light unto the world, that whosoever believeth in Me may not remain in darkness. The two blind men in the Gospel were less to be pitied, regarding their bodily affliction, than were the pharisees who refused to recognize Jesus as the Light of the world, and walked on still in darkness. The former believed in Jesus without seeing Him ; and, led by faith, followed Him : therefore, they received the blessing of sight. The latter beheld Him, heard the wisdom of His discourses, witnessed His numerous miracles ; and remained, nevertheless, in a state of incredulity. Being wilfully blind, they were for ever deprived of eternal light. Alas ! are there not many Christians who are also wilfully blind ? Who would believe it, were it not so painfully evident, that many to whom Jesus has even discovered the beauty of His perfections, and who have felt the power of His special grace, whereby He would attract them to follow Him closely, have shut their eyes to the light of truth ? He perchance, in His great mercy, continues to offer them peculiar favours for some time ; and yet they languish in fatal blindness, their indifference and ingratitude being as incomprehensible as they are blameworthy. Neither can the wisest counsellor make them see what they owe to God's goodness and patience ; or the path He has marked out for them : they will not accept the proffered help of those

whom He has appointed to be their guides ; while the darkness which encompasses them is fast deepening, in consequence of their infidelity. O Jesus ! help us to avoid this perilous condition ; and profiting by the light wherewith Thou hast illuminated our souls, may we securely proceed to that eternal Abode *which the glory of God hath enlightened, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof.*

II. POINT.

It is by fidelity to grace that we are preserved from spiritual blindness.

Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not. These words further elucidate the teaching of the miracle on which we are meditating ; and show us what we must do, to escape from so great an evil as spiritual blindness. We should avail ourselves of every ray of grace. If we are enabled to see that we are deficient with regard to a certain virtue—if by means of an instruction, we become more enlightened about some fault in ourselves—or should a passage in a book, or a pious conversation awaken any good thought or desire, then is the moment to take a step forward ; guided by the light God gives us, and intends us to make use of. In every meditation, in Holy Communion, in times of retreat, Jesus speaks, and says : *Walk whilst you have the light.* He is truly the Sun of our souls—and sheds the rays of His sweet grace continually upon them. The two blind men loved Jesus, from what they had heard of Him : they faithfully used the small means in their power, of knowing Him better. Before He gave sight to their eyes they had received the gift of faith in Him ; and animated by it, they resolved to avail themselves of the benefits which the approach of the Light of light would ensure. It attracted

them, it gave them hope and confidence. This was, they felt, a moment which, if once lost, might never return. If we were more attentive to watch for, and prompt to follow the leadings of God's grace, we should obey the counsel given by our Lord, later on in His Ministry: *Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not.*

COLLOQUY.

O Light of the world ! Who didst come down to earth to illuminate it by Thy Presence, and to enlighten the souls of men, preserve me from not acting according to the leading of the light of Thy grace. Shine forth, O Jesus, before the eyes of my soul, so that I may clearly see what steps Thou desirest me to take, under every circumstance of my life. Draw me by the attractiveness of Thy love and Thy beauty: may I, as a true child of light, live in the sunshine of Thy smile, and at length reach that bright Land where darkness is unknown.

RESOLUTION.

To watch attentively for every ray of light which emanates from Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Walk whilst you have the light.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Seventh Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

Dangers arising from infidelity in the service of God.

The unclean spirit having gone out of a man, saith : I will return into my house from whence I came out. And coming, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there : and the last state of that man is made worse than the first.—S. MATT. XII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine the joy experienced by the demoniac after being delivered from the devil.

II. PRELUDE.

Give to us, O Lord, a wholesome fear of neglecting to use the grace Thou bestowest : watching over ourselves with carefulness arising from humility, may we merit to be assisted by Thee to escape the snares of Satan.

POINT.

Notwithstanding that we may have received great graces, we must be careful to avoid the devil's craft and maliciousness.

Although we may be of that happy number, who have, by a miracle of grace, been released from the servitude of the world, and are the special objects of God's special favours,

we must nevertheless, and indeed on this very account, remain on our guard constantly—be prepared at any moment for renewed assaults. Jesus warns us of this; and tells us that prayer and vigilance are most necessary weapons, which we should never lay aside. *Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation*: our Lord does not infer that by these means we shall be sheltered from temptation, but from the evil consequences of it. Our vigilance must be untiring, for our enemy is never tired of watching his opportunities: and he has a secret understanding with our innate and vicious inclinations. His evil designs are more to be suspected by the just, who are apt to presume on their strength, than by penitents who dread their own weakness. Our enemy is probably now, at this moment, in ambuscade; whence he is spying our actions, waiting as usual for a favourable moment of attack. What if we should leave our heart at any time so unguarded, that he should gain an entrance there! To take the citadel by surprise—this is his aim, and it is better we should know it. The devil never sleeps—never rests—and he is very ambitious. He will win to himself, if he can, that heart which has been once swept by repentance, and garnished with graces; but from which fidelity has gone out (intending soon to return, no doubt) and left it empty. *What I say*, said our Lord, *I say to all, watch.*

II. POINT.

The unhappiness of a faithless soul.

We may further consider the miserable state, to which a once happy soul may be reduced, through want of carefulness and prayerfulness. When the Spirit of pride, of envy, of sensuality, of slothfulness, or any other Spirit of darkness

attempts to reconquer a soul, he examines its strength and its general condition : finding it now in a state of grace, purified from sin, fortified by holy desires, and impregnable (if he endeavoured to recover it alone,) he goes and brings several other fiends, worse even than himself, to attack this spiritual fortress. Then if vigilance and prayer are not quickly resorted to, if vanity be allowed to dazzle, or the length and furiousness of the assault to dismay, they gain an entrance, *and the last state of that unfaithful soul is made worse than the first.* We seem to hear Jesus continuing thus : O souls ! redeemed by Me, and chosen by Me to be the objects of My dearest favours—after having loved Me in return, and entered into a treaty with Myself—do not prove false to our agreement. In mercy I forewarn you, that should you permit my enemies to reconquer you, your downfall would be great indeed, since it would be in proportion to the height of that eminence on which, in My love, I had placed you, so that you might be nearer to Myself. Alas ! from the summit of justice some have fallen, and been ruined utterly ! O Lord Jesus ! (let us reply) we humbly beseech Thee, that as Thou hast restored our souls, and made them fit to be the recipients of Thy grace, so Thou wilt enable us to practise great faithfulness in the use of it ; to depend on Thee for strength, and never to leave our hearts unguarded against the assaults of our enemies.

COLLOQUY.

I will endeavour, O God, to be more careful ; lest I give the devil any occasion to suppose that I am not keeping in constant use the spiritual weapons of watchfulness and prayer. May my heart be swept and garnished indeed ; and may my best affections be always there, in attendance upon

Thyself, my Deliverer, and my Safeguard. Never leave me to myself. If my enemies assault me: *be Thou my Helper, forsake me not.*

RESOLUTION.

To increase in prayerfulness and vigilance.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Keep thy heart with all watchfulness.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Seventh Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

We should live and die in the spirit of the holy Martyrs.

Every one, therefore, that shall confess Me before men I will also confess him before My Father Who is in Heaven: He that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it.—S. MATT. X.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us to-day hear our Lord mentioning the possibility, that His followers may be called upon to die for Him.

II. PRELUDE.

O Lord Jesus, make us ever ready to confess Thee before men; and may we rejoice if accounted worthy to suffer or to die in Thy cause.

I. POINT.

What the spirit of a Martyr is.

The true spirit of a Martyr consists in an habitual readiness to suffer, and to sacrifice all, for the sake of Jesus Christ. It is a grace which God bestows upon His servants—a grace which renders them superior to the seductions of the world, and fearless of its power—a grace which gives them strength to remain unshaken in the midst of the assaults of Satan. And in effect, what can these two enemies, the world and the devil, really do against one who lives for God, and God only; and has only one fear—that of displeasing Him? What can they do against one who is always filled with those heroic sentiments which animated the holy Martyrs? This spirit should not be foreign to any, who own Jesus as their Lord: are we not all obliged to this—to lose all, even life itself, rather than offend God mortally? If He put our love to the test, and actual martyrdom were before us, to accept or to refuse, have we good reason to hope that, succoured by His grace, we should come off victorious, and win our crown of glory? Yes—if we profit by the help of God's grace continually; and are faithful in combating our spiritual enemies day by day. We can only in this way become practised and brave soldiers of Jesus Christ. But if we accustom ourselves to lay down our arms, to allow ourselves to be vanquished by fear or cowardice, flying before little sufferings, and ceding to our passions, we may well suppose that we possess nothing of the true spirit of a martyr. Those who have proved renegades in the hour of martyrdom, have been such as have not prepared themselves, by a previous life of mortification, to die rather than forsake their cause. They have assuredly not been loyal to their King on the battlefield of daily life.

II. POINT.

We should learn to die to ourselves daily.

He that striveth for the mastery, is not crowned except he strive lawfully. The devil has his martyrs; many have rushed upon death in his cause, and gone headlong into hell. If we would be crowned by Jesus, we must *strive lawfully*; using the weapons He assigns to each, and when and where He commands. There are many forms of Christian martyrdom, and they all presuppose death. We may never have an opportunity of confessing Jesus Christ as “the white-robed army of Martyrs” has done, in the face of cruel persecutors of the Church: but we can live a life of martyrdom, by dying to self daily. What mortifications have we not to endure, what sufferings have we not to pass through, if we are resolute in avowing our allegiance to Jesus on His Cross! And what a martyrdom was His!—shall we then find ours too long or too severe?—*Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friend*; and ought not the friends of Jesus to be more than willing to lose their lives for Him in any way, so only that He may be glorified. Each successive age has its martyrs: the manner of suffering for Jesus, and of confessing Him may vary; but the cause they have at heart is ever the same. Standing beneath the Standard of the Cross, let us examine our present lives; and see if we dare to range ourselves beside such as are bravely confessing Jesus Christ before men?—in rank with those who are living in the true spirit of the Church’s martyrs?

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, Strength of Martyrs! give me somewhat of that desire of suffering which has rendered many of Thy saints so

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pleasing to Thee, that Thou hast bestowed on them the grace to lay down their lives in very deed, and win the Martyr's crown. Oh! that their spirit might rest upon me, and cause me to confess Thee every day and hour by my words and actions; with a courage undaunted by human respect, or fear of contempt. And do Thou, O Lord, hereafter also confess me before the Heavenly Father.

RESOLUTION.

To be braver in suffering for Jesus, and in confessing Him.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

I die daily.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Seventh Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

The Woman who was a sinner, at the Feet of Jesus.

And one of the Pharisees desired JESUS to eat with him: He went into the house and sat down to meat. And behold a woman that was a sinner, when she knew that JESUS was there, brought an alabaster box of ointment: And standing behind at His Feet, she began to wash His Feet, and to wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His Feet and anointed them with the ointment JESUS saith to the woman: Thy sins are forgiven thee.—S. LUKE VII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves our Lord taking His place at the table in the house of the Pharisee ; and the Magdalene resolving to approach Jesus, and prove her penitence by tokens of love for Him.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Lord, that we may, by imitating the Magdalene's example of contrition and love, merit to obtain from Thee the pardon of our many sins.

I. POINT.

The goodness of Jesus towards sinners.

As we meditate upon His forgiveness of Mary Magdalene, let us first consider the goodness of our Divine Saviour. It is depicted on His Features—His ineffable kindness is observable in the tone of His Voice, and the choice of His words as He spoke of her to those around Him ; and then to her—to assure her of His forgiveness. We all know by experience, how gentle and merciful Jesus is in His dealings with sinners: how His sweet charity attracts us from the world, and brings us to His Feet. As the poor sinful woman knelt beside the Saint of saints, far from repulsing her, He looked into the depths of her soul, saw her deep regret for the past, and knew that her tears and her silence expressed her compunction and her love. Her heart spoke, and told her Saviour all. He understood ; and made use of a parable, which, while it consoled and reassured her, had the effect of suspending the harsh judgments which many of the guests were inclined to pronounce against her. Instancing a creditor, to whom

one debtor owed much, and another little, He asked (in the case of his forgiving both) which of the two would most appreciate the goodness of their creditor: *And Simon answering: I suppose he to whom he forgave most; Jesus rejoined: Thou hast judged rightly.* Oh, the goodness and gentleness of our Loving Saviour towards penitent sinners. He says the same to all: *Thy sins are forgiven thee*—words of absolving grace, falling upon the soul, and rendering it free from stain, and pure! May we, like the Magdalene, believe in their efficacy, so that we too (having heard those words of power) may hear these also of quiet consolation: *Go in peace.*

II. POINT.

The generosity of soul manifested by the conduct of Mary Magdalene.

As we picture to ourselves the scene in the house of Simon the Pharisee, we cannot fail to notice how the genuineness of the Magdalene's conversion is shown by her whole demeanour. She has evidently one all-absorbing desire: that of reaching Jesus and laying down her burden at His Feet. There must be no delay, straight forward through every difficulty she passes towards her Saviour. So bent is she on attaining her purpose, that while exposing herself to many humiliations, she fears them not. She heeds scorn and derision as little as she has hitherto heeded the consequences of the loss of her good name. We see to what a degree of perfection in virtue true contrition leads one on. Courage—singleness of purpose—humility—justice in repairing injuries—absence of human respect—love and confidence towards God, are its consequences. We may judge of the reality of our repentance, by examining it side by side, with first one and then another of the virtues

I. POINT.

Jesus is with us in our homes.

Let us contemplate our Lord, as we see Him seated in the house of His friend Lazarus ; and the happiness with which all hearts are filled in consequence of His Presence there. Martha is evincing her joy and gladness in her own characteristic manner, and Mary in hers. Both are serving Him—the one by her active zeal in so doing, the other by her quieter manifestation of love. We may picture to ourselves with what condescending kindness Jesus accepts their proofs of devotedness, and their hospitable attention to Him, their Divine Guest. As we do so, we may be inclined to envy them ; and to wish that we too had so favourable an opportunity of testifying our readiness to serve Him in person. And yet is not our Lord within our habitations, *not far from every one of us ?* He accepts the entertainment we offer Him to-day, as graciously as if our house were that privileged home in Bethania. With Mary we may place ourselves at His Feet, listen to His counsels, and commune with Him—Heart to heart : express to Him our gratitude, as we realize the certainty of His love for us. Keeping near to Jesus we shall forget ourselves—we shall see Him only ; our highest joy will be to receive assurances of His appreciation of our desire, to shew Him deferential affection. Let us draw His attention to our seeming difficulties ; let us make no secret, with Him, of our little domestic trials ; but with Martha's straightforward simplicity, tell him just what we feel. If we are really attentive, we shall understand His words of rebuke, or of encouragement : where we are acting too impulsively ; and where over-anxious or over-hasty in our deductions. Let us always be waiting upon Jesus—enter-

taining Him—serving Him with quiet activity,—reposing under the influence of His Presence, *in Whom we live, and move, and are.*

II. POINT.

The lessons taught by Jesus to Martha and Mary.

Our Lord appeared to reprove Martha just at the moment when she, according to our judgment perhaps, least deserved it. She was busying herself, unaided by her sister, to prepare a repast worthy of this great occasion. She would honour her Guest by every outward demonstration of esteem and respect. And to this our Lord did not object : genuine love cannot fail to manifest itself openly ; and it certainly was Martha's place to pay every possible attention to Him Whom she had *received into her house*. He would not hinder her from fulfilling her evident duty ; but He desired that into her active labours she would carry the quiet spirit of recollection—that the ardour of her zeal should be tempered by the calm assurance, that Jesus perfectly understood her feeling that she could never do enough for Him. How happy should we be if, repressing all mere natural eagerness, and banishing all dissipation of heart and mind, we lived in the midst of that tranquillity which is the consequence of the subdual of nature. Martha's careful attention was laudable, but there was the admixture of impetuosity and over-anxiousness ; and these our Lord so charitably pointed out as faults. *Martha, Martha*, He says, *thou art troubled*. In the Presence of Jesus, then, we learn that all trouble of mind is to be put away : it is out of place there. Nature causes disturbance and agitation, but grace gives quiet and repose. Let us choose the better part ; and seek to perfect ourselves in the holy practice of the Presence of God, and

to be so closely united to Him, that our intercourse with Him be uninterrupted.

COLLOQUY.

I thank Thee for the example Martha affords me; and may I, O my Well-Beloved, receive Thee into the home of my heart, and make every arrangement to entertain Thee therein with due reverence, with a quiet mind: regulating all my actions by Thy sanctifying grace. Teach me how to live in that spirit of recollection which called forth Thy commendation in favour of Mary; and often remind me that: *But one thing is needful.* And what this *one thing* is Thou hadst already explained to Thy Disciples: *Be not solicitous on this or that account: Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.* Yes, Jesus! reign Thou in my heart, and govern my every action and desire.

RESOLUTION.

To live in the immediate Presence of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Mary hath chosen the better part.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Seventh Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

Jesus raises Lazarus to life.

The sisters of Lazarus sent to JESUS, saying: Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick. . . . JESUS said to His Disciples: Lazarus, our friend, sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.—S. JOHN XI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us again enter the house at Bethania; there Martha and Mary, in their deep sorrow, are awaiting the arrival of Jesus.

II. PRELUDE.

O All-powerful Saviour, full of compassion and goodness, Who dost reward the confidence shewn towards Thyself by such prodigies of grace, we also send messages begging of Thee to come to relieve us in our trials.

I. POINT.

Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.

Remembering the instructions on charity given by our Lord, and having already witnessed the effects of His goodness, the two sisters were united in their desire that Jesus should be informed of the illness of their brother; confidently persuaded that He, their best and truest Friend, would not fail to come to them in that hour of affliction. Happy is the household in which Jesus is honoured and served as He was in that of Lazarus; where He Himself, in

His representatives—the poor and needy—finds succour and relief. What favours, what blessings may not be expected from Him Who looks upon all that is done to them as done to Himself! We observe the confidence which animated Martha and Mary—perceivable in the simple message sent by them to Jesus; this confidence rendered it a most touching prayer. How great faith in His power, trust in His friendship, and loving eloquence there are in the words : *Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.* And yet Jesus, after receiving the message, *still remained two days in the same place.* He, it is distinctly stated, *loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus,* this was why He thus acted. Their Divine Friend intended to give them more than they could desire; higher favours than they could dream of. We little know how our prayers will be answered: seldom are they answered directly as we expect; but of this we may be sure—we shall never receive less than we have asked for, trustingly, hopefully. Is not this our experience?

II. POINT.

I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live.

Most forcibly does our Divine Saviour here speak, in order to cause us to meditate deeply concerning the importance of His words; and to intensify our confidence in Himself.—Wishing to teach us that we should hope even against hope, He went to Bethania, but not until Lazarus had been dead four days. There, by the side of his grave, full of pity for the bereaved, Jesus wept. He testifies to the union in Himself, of tenderness and power: a few minutes later, in obedience to His command, death relinquishes his prey, and Lazarus is restored to his family. How inscrutable are the designs

of God ! how far above our comprehension are the mysteries of divine love ! On those whom He loves most, He confers the most suffering. Jesus often treats His greatest friends with apparently the greatest severity : they are plunged into grief, they acquaint Him with it, and He, as it were, lets things take their course : yet all the while, each sigh is heard by Him—each pang is measured—each tear is counted. Although we cannot understand what His purposes are, we should nevertheless enter into them ; by absolutely abandoning ourselves and all that concerns us, to His wise and careful treatment. The history of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, repeats itself in the life of God's dearest children. The remembrance of it avails to console and strengthen those, who have to wait long for an answer to their prayer. When it seems *too late* to us, it is not so to Him, Who is the Resurrection and the Life. Does He not say to us as to Martha : *If thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God* ; and that, not only in the fulfilment of His designs of mercy and love at the best moment for us, but in their glorious results throughout eternity.

COLLOQUY.

I send a message to Thee, O Lord, to-day, by Thy blessed Mother, and my patron Saints : *one whom Thou lovest is sick*. Revive the drooping energies of my soul. If Thou art with me it will not die : Thou, Who art the Resurrection and the Life, canst, I know, raise me up to *walk in newness of life* here, and preserve me from eternal death. When wearied with watching and praying, inspire me still with hope and confidence in Thee ; and may I thank Thee when Thou dost try my faith and patience, as Thou hast tried that of Thy best-beloved friends. O my God ! let my testi-

mony also be, that though *my soul hath fainted after Thy salvation: yet in Thy word I have hoped very much.*

RESOLUTION.

To quickly have recourse to Jesus; but to wait patiently for His sensible help.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

If thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Eighth Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.**The unfaithful Steward.**

There was a certain rich man who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods.—
S. LUKE XVI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us listen with holy awe to the warning which Jesus here gives to His Disciples, and be of the number of those who practically give heed to the lesson of the unjust steward.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Lord, to prepare for the great Day of

Account, so that we escape all accusations of having wasted Thy goods.

I. POINT.

Each day we should prepare to give to God an account of our works.

God has admitted us into His service, as stewards of His goods. According to His Divine Will, He has distributed to each, gifts of nature and gifts of grace ; of all which we are bound to make a careful use. If we are faithful stewards, far from appropriating these goods to ourselves, we shall look upon them, as committed to our charge, for a longer or shorter period ; and be prepared at any moment, to give in our account of the way in which we have used them. And this obligation to fidelity is all the more important, because we have heard our Master say : that He may call us, to reckon with us, just when we least expect it. The best preparation for this Day of Account, consists in putting out to interest the talents lent by God to us—using them for His glory, and the sanctification of ourselves and others. We must watch constantly, to see if we are daily improving in value these gifts, with which we are entrusted,—examine ourselves as to whether we duly repair our losses,—and regain what has been misspent, or wholly wasted. Are we habitually making compensation for our failures through negligence, by penance ? Do we grieve over these losses, because we, through them, wrong God ? Are our affairs in order ? our accounts in readiness ? Dare we look for God's approval, if placed to-day by the hand of death before the tribunal of His divine Justice ? Are we so acting that any accusation on the part of our enemy, that we had wasted our Master's goods, would be rendered null and void ? Let

us be prudent—let us not be taken by surprise : *Declare unto us, O Lord, the fewness of our days.*

II. POINT.

How is it that I hear this of thee ?

There was a certain rich man, who had a steward, and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods. This master, indignant at being thus wronged, caused the servant who had abused his confidence, to appear before him. *How is it that I hear this of thee ?* he asks : *thou canst be steward no longer.* He had been looking upon the goods with which he was entrusted as his own ; and according to his own pleasure, disposing of them ; spending them unprofitably, and when it was too late, he exclaims : *What shall I do ?* May we never have reason to cry out in consternation : *What shall I do ?* I cannot humble myself, having never acquired the practice of doing so ; I cannot beg for pardon, for I am held back by shame. The wisdom of the world will avail little in such a case, when remorse and despair rush in upon the soul of one, from whom his Lord takes away his stewardship—because of his unfaithfulness—his lack of true wisdom, which is from above. Let us count up, if we can, the many and various graces we have received from Heaven—powers of body and mind—spiritual favours : or estimate, if we are able, the value of the minutes, days, and years in which we have been permitted to trade with our talents, and gain yet more. Now is the time to ask ourselves : *What shall I do* to prove myself a faithful steward ?—*What shall I do* to shew my appreciation of the favour conferred on me by my Divine Master, in appointing me to take care of His goods ? *What shall I*

do to-day—just now—in order to have a better, fuller account, to render this very evening to Him ?

COLLOQUY.

O my God ! I rejoice in the thought that I am entirely dependent on Thee for all that I possess. Indeed I have nothing of myself, but in Thee I possess all things. But how little do I turn Thy goods to account ; how sadly do I waste and lose them ! Let me therefore humble myself, and seek Thy pardon for my past remissness ; and may I never hear Thee say to me : *Thou canst be steward no longer*. Accept my resolve to make a really good and diligent use of all the gifts of nature and of grace, which Thou hast committed to my care. For these I am accountable ; and yet what are the present results of my administration ? Is the balance in favour of Thee, Who art so beneficent, yet so just ?

RESOLUTION.

To do each action as if I were to die immediately after it.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

How is it that I hear this of thee ?

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Eighth Week after Pentecost.—Monday.**The miraculous cures effected at the Pond—called
Probatika.**

Now there was at Jerusalem a pond called Probatika, having five porches: And in these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered, waiting for the moving of the water: And an Angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond, and the water was moved: And he that went down first into the pond, after the motion of the water, was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under.—S. JOHN V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the porches or galleries which surrounded the Pond, called Probatika, and the multitudes of sick persons lying within them.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Lord, that esteeming as we ought the Sacrament of Penance—the Probatika of the law of grace—we may know when and how to profit, by the precious advantages offered therein to our souls.

I. POINT.

The cleansing wave of the Baptism of Penance is much more efficacious than the health-giving waters of the pond at Jerusalem.

It was doubtless a great advantage to the Jewish people to possess in their chief city this extraordinary pool of water, where miracles of healing were wrought. Not that it had the inherent quality of curing diseases; it was after the movement of the water, caused by the descent into it of the Angel of the Lord, at certain times, that the cure was infallibly effected. But all this typified a higher and perpetual miracle of grace. It was a figure of that holy Fountain, to which the spiritually infirm may approach, without the slightest fear of having to wait in vain, or go away disappointed. The priests of the Church—God's Messengers—not only at certain seasons, but constantly, may be found, to apply to our souls the Sacred Stream of the Most Precious Blood. It is efficacious to cure our maladies, however grave they may be, if we only desire our restoration to health. Do we press forward as they did, who lay under bodily infirmities near the pond of Probatca? and earnestly desire to be delivered from our spiritual infirmities? How do we avail ourselves of this inestimable benefit? gladly? reverently? constantly? What an unfailing resource does not the charity of our Saviour disclose to all sinners, and for the advantage of each one of us in particular! Happy are we if we know how to appreciate the saving graces which the Sacrament of Penance conveys to the soul; and with lively gratitude profit by the frequent opportunities afforded us, of being both cleansed from sin, and strengthened in justice.

II. POINT.

We must not approach the Sacrament of Penance simply by routine; but with living faith, and a real desire of being washed in the Precious Blood.

Around the pond, at Jerusalem, there were a number of persons, each one afflicted with a particular malady, blindness—lameness—paralysis—enfeebled health. So around the tribunal of Penance are gathered such as are weak—having little love for God, or fervour in serving Him, and languishing for want of spiritual force. Some find it difficult to walk in the path of perfection; while others again are incapable of seeing their defects clearly, or the beauties of virtue. There are cases where the powers of the soul are paralysed; no efforts are being made to advance in holiness, nor to arise out of a state of negligence and supineness. To which of these classes do we belong? Our daily examen of conscience should shew us which is our predominant fault—our most serious malady. . . . It was the one who first stepped down into the water that was healed: this teaches us the necessity of shaking off sloth, of availing ourselves of the opportunities of grace, with promptitude and energy. If we fall let us quickly rise, lest indifference and sluggishness keep us from the right and efficacious use of the Sacrament we are considering. Ardent desires after real sanctity, a sincere wish to have even the least disfigurement removed, the smallest imperfection effaced, will ensure to us the due appreciation of an unfailing remedy.

COLLOQUY.

Thou hast, O my Saviour, opened a most pure Fountain, in which I may wash, and be cleansed and invigorated. Help me to use this precious means of salvation with alacrity, and perseverance; until the most persistent disease of my soul be entirely cured. May I, by holy desires and watchful diligence, co-operate with Thy grace; and so gratefully

receive its sanctifying effects, that my soul may live to praise and thank Thee for ever and ever.

RESOLUTION.

To prepare myself better for confession.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Wash me yet more from my iniquity.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Eighth Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

True life is found in Jesus Christ.

JESUS said to the Jews: Search the Scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that give testimony of Me: And you will not come to Me that you may have life.—S. JOHN V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us draw near to Jesus as He teaches in the Temple, and listen attentively to the lesson He gives on practical faith.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Author of Life, may we, with an upright intention, seek to know all that in Holy Scripture testifies of Thee; that our love for Thee may be increased by this means.

I. POINT.

Eternal life can be obtained only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus reproached the Jews for studying the Scriptures so unprofitably; they read them with *the veil upon their hearts*, the veil of prejudice and of self-deceit: they would not recognise that the lowly Son of Mary was the Messiah. Do we give our Lord no cause to reproach us also? at least on certain points. We read indeed God's holy Word with respect, we take much pleasure in all that tells us of our Divine Example, but have we yet arrived at the practical conviction that we ought to follow in His footsteps? to abide by His counsels? to go to Him for life—daily, hourly? Do we study Holy Writ with the desire to conform ourselves to its doctrines concerning humility, poverty, self-renunciation, and all the other virtues practised by the God-Man? If not, we are searching the Scriptures in vain. We have them in our hands; and all the while perhaps, are so sensitive about a slight affront, an unmerited rebuke, a contemptuous remark, a point of honour. Are there no remnants at least, of worldliness? no signs of immortification with regard to the pleasures of sense, and love of ease? *When they shall be converted to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.* Oh! let us go to Jesus, and beg Him to remove all that self-love and self-deception, which hides the truth from our minds.

II. POINT.

Jesus will impart to us His own Life, so that we may live in Him.

If the folly of the Jews was great in not accepting Jesus and His holy law of love, how far greater must ours be, if we reject Him as our example. He teaches us so distinctly by His words and His actions, that we cannot presume to suppose that we are safe in relying on the holiness of the state of life to which we are called, while we neglect personal sanctity. We are perhaps ready to admit the sublimity of such a life as that of the humble, despised Jesus of Nazareth; but yet shrink from participating in it. If we would be truly wise we shall study how to shape our lives according to His Own; and going to Him, beg that He will increase in our hearts a real practical love for His manner of life when on earth. Daily meditation upon that which the Gospels make known to us of the Divine perfection of our Saviour, cannot fail to lead us on to imitate those virtues which constituted that perfection. We shall have to acquire them by degrees, first one and then another; the attraction being this: the ultimate attainment of a resemblance to our Lord. The more formed that resemblance becomes, the more pleasing shall we be in the eyes of the Heavenly Father—the more entirely shall we be governed and influenced by the Holy Spirit. To make our lives conformable to the Life of Jesus—such is our happy task—such the result of a right study of the Scriptures. Knowledge in spiritual matters must be accompanied—directed by love. Love for Jesus Christ, springing from this knowledge, should mould our lives.

COLLOQUY.

O Holy Spirit, inspire me with a profound reverence for the Word of God, and assist me rightly to meditate on the truths it imparts. Give me to understand especially how to study the Life of the Incarnate Word, so that I may become like Him. May I take heed to the warning He uttered, as to the motive I should have in searching the Scriptures; and never fail to recognise in the humble, poor, suffering, self-sacrificing, and despised Man of Sorrows, my Example. To Thee, O Jesus, let me come, that I may have life.

RESOLUTION.

To make the characteristics of Jesus my own, as far as I possibly can.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Search the Scriptures, the same are they that give testimony of Me.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

Eighth Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

The Manner in which our Lord judges.

As I hear so I judge; and My judgment is just: because I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.—

S. JOHN V.

I. PRELUDE.

We enter the Temple, and hear our Divine Saviour speaking to the people about the Last Day. He tells them of the method on which He forms His judgment.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Jesus, to form our judgments according to Thine own; and to act in all things, not in compliance with our own will, but with that of the Heavenly Father.

I. POINT.

The principle, in accordance with which our Lord judges.

All men have great reason to mistrust their own judgment; because all are inclined to judge of things according to their natural character and disposition. One who has a leaning towards avarice, esteems wealth, and dreads poverty: another who is inclined to gratify his senses, judges bodily mortification unnecessary—imprudent even: a third having a tendency to be worldly, and fond of excitement, wholly condemns silence and a love of retirement,—and so on. Private judgment savours of the divers sentiments by which each one is animated: and with regard to the motives which sway the outward conduct, it is usually the heart which leads captive the intelligence. And it is against this dangerous tendency that our Divine Master puts us on our guard. Having appeared amongst men to rectify their conduct, He teaches us how to form our judgment aright; not upon the passing and varying emotions which may affect us, but upon the testimony of the Holy Spirit, to which a truly spiritual person, by force of habit, listens. By so doing, we shall steady our judgment, and be able to say with Jesus: *As I*

hear, so I judge. Then will the enjoyments of this life—the goods of this world—appear to us what they in reality are, delusive pleasures—poor advantages ; both as unenduring as they are superficial. And, on the contrary, crosses, humiliations, and trials of patience become precious in our eyes, in consideration of the abundant merits we may acquire by their means.

II. POINT.

The interior spirit which regulated the actions of Jesus.

O Jesus, give to us a great love for that divinely-inspired principle of action, as well as of judgment, which has for its author the Holy Spirit of God. We have seen that if our judgment is to be just, we must at all times consult this Divine Oracle. And regarding the rule of our actions, we find that we should follow that laid down by Thee, O Jesus, in the words: *I seek not My own will but the will of Him that sent me.* We are not to take counsel of our own tastes, and inclinations—our likes and dislikes ; in fact, we must be deaf to the suggestions of nature, with her many repugnances and exactions. The voice of conscience demands our first attention ; it will remind us of what the Will of God is for us, under the various circumstances of life. Holy inspirations indicate the next steps to be taken, in order to rise to the degree of perfection to which each one is called. Does conscience always secure a hearing ? Do not holy inspirations often *return void to Him Who sent them* ? Yes ! for they are *not* unheeded, by such only as are recollected ; by such as are animated by a true desire of obeying the dictates of the Divine Will ; and of *bringing the understanding into captivity to the obedience of Christ.* In contemplating His submission to the Father's Will, the beauty of its perfectness

is gradually unfolded before the eyes of the soul; and attracts it more and more to hasten forward, aided by the brightness of its reflection—its undeviating track of light.

COLLOQUY.

How grateful should I be, O Lord, for the sublime teaching afforded by Thy example of obedience to the Father's Will! How can I ever be in doubt as to whether I should follow my own will, or His! Help me to bring my will and judgment into a perfect conformity with His own—to judge according to the inspirations of the Spirit of Truth—and so to exercise myself in seeking to fulfil the designs of God, that all self-seeking may die out of my thoughts and affections.

RESOLUTION.

Before acting, to consult the Blessed Spirit, and then follow His inspirations.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Eighth Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

The Kindness and Goodness of Jesus.

Behold My servant Whom I have chosen, My beloved in Whom My soul hath been well pleased. I will put My spirit

upon Him. He shall not contend, nor cry out : The bruised reed He shall not break : and smoking flax He shall not extinguish.—S. MATT. XII.

I. PRELUDE.

The Lord of Heaven and earth is standing amongst the common people : the courtiers of the King of kings are a few illiterate fishermen.

II. PRELUDE.

Teach us, O Lord, how to practise at all times, kindness and gentleness towards those with whom we come in contact.

I. POINT.

The gentleness of Jesus was unalterable.

Let us consider Jesus Christ setting us all an example of the most perfect courtesy, and unvarying kindness. To our imagination, He appears surrounded (as He so often was during His public Ministry) by vast multitudes of people. He allows them to approach Him ; He grants them their wishes ; He performs many miracles for their benefit. We cannot fail to be impressed by the gentleness of His demeanour. His patience and forbearance under circumstances which would perhaps try ours beyond endurance, call forth our admiration. . . . Gentleness, patience and forbearance are due to a spirit of self-sacrifice ; and what a power for good they have over hearts ! A thoroughly unselfish person paves the way for great blessings. According to the testimony of Holy Writ, and of every-day experience also, the effects of

these virtues are found to be irresistible ; whilst on the contrary, harshness and severity raise the barrier of antipathy, and harden the heart, and aggravate the calamities which kindness would assuredly assuage. What better can we do than learn from our Divine Master the secrets of His own sweet charity ; and beg of Him to cultivate in our souls the grace of courteous gentleness, so that all who approach us may acknowledge the high merits of Him in Whose school we are being trained.

II. POINT.

I will put My spirit upon Him.

God, by His prophet, had declared that the spirit of meekness should rest upon His Beloved Son : *He shall not contend : The bruised reed He shall not break.* And how exactly is this prophecy fulfilled when we see Him encircled by the clamorous, the ill-mannered, the querulous, the sick, the ignorant. They press near—they touch His Sacred Person ; and He shows no disgust, no vexation, no weariness. There is no gesture on His part, no word escaping His Lips, indicative of aught but loving considerateness. Let us ask ourselves how we should have acted under similar circumstances ; how we do, in fact, bear the importunities, the uncongeniality, the ignorance we meet with in others ? Do we, for the love of God, repress our susceptibility ? conquer our prejudices ? speak, listen, act as Jesus did, when the people pressed upon Him—to ask Him questions—to criticise what He said in His discourses—curiously to observe His actions ? *I will put My Spirit upon Him*, God the Father had said ; and when the time came, and the prophecy was fulfilled with such Divine perfection, *His Voice came down from the excel-*

lent glory : This is My Beloved Son, hear ye Him. Hear ! and then strive to imitate His benign manner of dealing with others ; to suffer patiently for and through them ; to love them with purest charity ; to labour zealously to procure their sanctification, and the glory of God.

COLLOQUY.

I adore Thee, O Jesus, as I watch Thy actions and listen to Thy teaching. Thy loving-kindness excites my admiration, and fills me with an earnest desire of imitating Thy goodness in regard to all who approached Thee. I would dwell upon it so often, that my whole conduct, my manner of acting and speaking, might be affected by this consideration. It is Thy humility that I need, O my Dear Saviour, and Thy universal charity. Had I these I should gain more hearts in the cause of real piety ; and should help to promote a truly religious spirit, by doing all things for the gospel's sake, that Thy Kingdom might be advanced, and Thy Church might triumph.

RESOLUTION.

Often to say to myself : Would Jesus act and speak thus ?

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Let every one of you please his neighbour, to edification.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Eighth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

Jesus lays the foundation of evangelical perfection.

JESUS went up into a mountain, and when He was sat down, His disciples came unto Him, and He taught them.—S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us adore Jesus Christ as the Sovereign Master of all mankind, as we represent Him to ourselves seated upon the side of the mountain. He is about to enumerate the eight Beatitudes, and to shew that through them we shall find the way of true happiness.

II. PRELUDE.

Dispose our hearts and minds, O Lord, rightly to comprehend Thy words; and unceasingly to follow the path of virtue traced out by Thyself, in announcing the eight Beatitudes to Thy Disciples.

I. POINT.

The chief characteristics of the perfect life, to which Jesus would attract us :—sublimity—beauty—happiness.

Our Lord had selected His Twelve Apostles : wishing to instruct them, and form them for the mission for which they were destined, He particularly addressed to them, in the presence of a large multitude, a discourse wherein He shewed them the way which leads to true blessedness. As

we, the disciples of Jesus, are called to follow the same track, let us study the sublimity, the beauty, the happiness of our destiny. It is sublime—the Son of God came down from Heaven to lead us upwards to perfection. Mankind had made happiness to consist in earthly pleasure, and the possession of the goods of this life; but the Son of God, by raising our thoughts and sentiments above this world's level, fixes them upon celestial joys which will never fade, and treasures which cannot perish. . . . The beauty of our destiny in being called to a state of perfection, is clearly seen in the lives of the Saints; they have been indeed ennobled by their virtues, the lustre of which has rendered the Church in each successive age, more and more glorious. . . . The saints have also testified to the delights experienced by those, who set the prize of eternal life before them; and take upon themselves the sweet yoke of Jesus, and His light burden. They are happy because they are meek and poor in spirit; blessed because they are merciful and clean of heart. Yes, truly! heavenly consolations far surpass all earthly joys.

II. POINT.

Jesus, by His example and His grace renders the way of the Beatitudes easy.

Our Divine Master, having come to mark out for us the way of perfection, was not content merely to make it known by His admirable Sermon on the Mount, but He passed by that same way Himself: by His virtues we trace His Foot-steps along it. To what a degree has He not practised poverty? has He not suffered? and met with opposition? Who has wept over the sins of the world with deeper sorrow? Who has been a greater friend to peace? In whom

could we find so perfect an example of innocence and pureness? And why was He subjected to so many persecutions and hardships, if not through these to open the way which should conduct the elect to perfection? Before our Lord appeared, the human race suffered indeed, but sages and philosophers knew neither how to relieve its moral anguish, nor explain its cause. They either adopted pride as a remedy for suffering, or foolishly denied its existence; or in insensate despair, strove to drown it in the excess of voluptuousness. . . . The Redeemer appeared: He assumed the life of mankind, in order to give us His own. He taught us that suffering (the offspring of the corruption of sin) is a thing real and inevitable, and at the same time necessary for our sanctification; that patience renders suffering meritorious; that a value is placed upon it—and such a value, as to make it become to the true Christian a real source of joy and thankfulness. It confirms our hope of a glorious immortality. If we have really entered on the way of perfection, we shall surely find that it will lead us straight to Jesus; for He is awaiting our arrival by the path He trod, and will welcome us—at the end of our journey—into the Realms of eternal rest and gladness.

COLLOQUY.

O my Jesus, Thou hast had me in view when Thou camest on earth, to make known the way that leads to perfection; give me grace to follow it until my last breath. May I discover all the beauty and excellence of the life to which Thou hast called me; and in pursuing it, find all my happiness in the thought that I am following Thee. In the time of suffering console me with the remembrance of the blessings thou hast pronounced over those, who with holy emula-

tion strive to imitate Thine own virtues, O Jesus. Attracted by them, may I be ever advancing towards the enjoyment of eternal rest with Thee, and Thy Saints.

RESOLUTION.

To profit really by the study of the Beatitudes.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

JESUS sat down and taught His disciples.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Eighth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

Poverty of Spirit : first Beatitude.

Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.—S. MATT V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us place ourselves on the mountain amongst the persons assembled there around our Lord ; and listen to the first words of His discourse : *Blessed are the poor in spirit.*

II. PRELUDE.

Deign, O Lord, to replenish us with Thy Spirit, so that we may fail not to understand and to love the maxim Thou dost here lay down for our consideration.

I. POINT.

The excellence of poverty of spirit, and the happiness of such as practise it.

To be *poor in spirit* is to love, with heart and soul, to be deprived of all that attracts us unduly to any earthly possession. Rather would they, who really practise this virtue, lose all that this world can afford, than suffer the loss of the goods which are eternal. It is this motive which prompts so many souls to be generous towards God; and voluntarily to renounce all that they possess, in order to follow Jesus in His poverty, as closely as possible. Lovers of the world covet for their portion, gold, silver, and vast possessions: lovers of God eagerly desire a possession that surpasses all these—that is Himself. God is the patrimony of the truly poor in spirit; and the hope of Heaven is more to them than gold and precious stones. Happy indeed are they who procure all this, at the cost of a few years of detachment from the pleasures and riches of this life. They who possess Jesus, possess more than all the treasures of the universe: in Him they find all—they need nothing—they desire nothing. In possessing the Supreme Good, all that is terrestrial seems unworthy of their affection. If into their hands have been committed wealth or honour, they use them according to the designs of God, and make them to be instrumental for His glory; while (all unseen it may be, by human eye) many voluntary and self-enforced privations are endured. O Lord Jesus! grant that we, whom Thou hast called to an eternal inheritance, may put so high a value upon it, that for sake of it we may renounce gladly all that could attach our hearts to this fleeting world. Be Thou Thyself our All.

II. POINT.

The recompense promised to those who are voluntarily poor.

The recompense that our Divine Lord has promised to such as leave all, to possess only Himself, consists in an abundance of spiritual blessings in this world ; and in the next world, eternal life—the joy, and rest, and glory of Heaven. God alone, the Master of all things, could give or accomplish so magnificent a promise. They who make choice of a life of poverty in religion realise its fulfilment in all its entirety. They have given everything to God, and preferred Him before all other possessions ; and He, in return, takes special care of them, in relation both to body and soul. Saint Ambrose, exalting the nobleness and magnanimity of soul in those who practise great poverty of spirit, says “He is truly rich before God, who esteems the world as an atom, and the earth as a particle of dust : he is rich for eternity, for he is amassing, not undurable goods, but those imperishable treasures whose price cannot be estimated.” It may be that we are far from being poor in spirit—and yet how is this? How can we be so unheedful of those words of Jesus : *Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

COLLOQUY.

O my God, how greatly ought I to praise and bless Thee, for having sent Thy Son to teach me to know and to appreciate what true riches are,—what the eternal results of taking Thee for my portion, and renouncing the transitory advantages of this world, will be. How little, alas ! do I practise poverty of spirit ! I find the exercise of detachment

difficult, because the bright promise of the Kingdom of Heaven is often eclipsed by glittering illusions surrounding earthly possessions. Dispel these, O God, once and for ever ; and enable me by Thy Holy Spirit's aid, to love poverty as Jesus did, and for His Sake.

RESOLUTION.

To remind myself constantly of the promise attached to poverty of spirit.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Ninth Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

Jesus wept over Jerusalem.

When JESUS drew near to Jerusalem, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying : If thou hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace : but now they are hidden from thy eyes.—S. LUKE XIX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus as He paused in His descent down Mount Olivet, and shed tears of compassion over the beautiful, but infatuated city lying before Him.

II. PRELUDE.

To the Pitying Heart of the God-Man do we humbly pray for grace and understanding to bewail the sad effects of sin in the world ; and to enable us to do our utmost to lessen the number of its victims.

I. POINT.

God waits that men may repent ; but His justice fails not.

The hour of retribution was at hand : Jerusalem had been obstinate in filling up the measure of her iniquity, and in closing her ears to the oft-repeated warnings and threatenings regarding the doom which was awaiting her, if she did not repent nor recognise *the things that were to her peace*. She refused to see the terrible evils which by her infidelity she was drawing down upon herself. How grievous to the Heart of Jesus was her impending woe ! *For the affliction of the daughter of My people, am I afflicted, He says, and made sorrowful—because none doth penance for sin*. Therefore Jesus weeps. Have we never taken part with those who have caused affliction to the Heart of our Lord, and made Him weep ? It is sin and sin alone—in its effects—that gives Him sorrow ; and this, because He knows that that divine attribute of God—justice—must punish the abuse of His grace. If this abuse become habitual, it hardens the heart ; and all the tender forbearance, the patient waiting of the Heavenly Father is lost upon it. Are we seeking to gain a better knowledge of those things which are for our peace, our true peace ? Let us not trust to excited feelings of piety, as fitful as they are delusive : they may carry us away from time to time, and incline us to join in the song of triumph :

Hosanna to the Son of David ; but before long we shall have descended the hill-side, and be lost again amongst the careless, if not actually wicked, inhabitants of the city of the world ; and on our account Jesus will have cause again to weep.

II. POINT.

We should share in the grief felt by our Lord, on His way into Jerusalem.

The mercy of God is infinite, but the effects of it are limited. How constantly is He soliciting His people, by interior and exterior means, not to bring about their own destruction. Where these means are stubbornly resisted, a fatal hardening of the heart is inevitable : but where they are accepted and made use of, the heart is rendered virtuous, meek, compassionate, and strong to persevere in goodness. Salvation almost invariably depends on the right use of some particular grace ; and they who despise the gifts God sees fit to bestow now, certainly do not merit to receive others at another time. Who can believe that a soul will make good use of a grace at the hour of death, which it has scorned throughout life ? *To-day* (God is ever repeating, as He strives to make all men hear His voice)—*to-day harden not your hearts. Behold, now is the acceptable time : behold, now is the day of salvation.* Up to the last He offers to us all, even to the greatest sinners, the grace of repentance ; but this final act of mercy is often rejected : some men are so callous that even the tears of Jesus would have no more effect on them, than they had on the stony-hearted people of Jerusalem. While we compassionate the sad lot of such as evidently abuse the grace of God, we shall do well to see

what our own shortcomings are—through want of watchfulness and spiritual energy. With what particular graces, with what special talents, has God endowed each one of us? We should know for which to be most grateful, to the Giver of all good gifts, and see if we are making full use of them.

COLLOQUY.

O Holy Spirit, may I not grieve Thee by repulsing Thee from my heart when Thou bringest me a good inspiration. O Celestial Messenger, may I never coldly dismiss Thee, when Thou comest with any gift for me from Heaven! Let me understand more clearly with what tenderness our Saviour loves mankind: let me learn to weep with Him over those who will not be converted; to labour and to suffer in order to prevent the endless ruin of so many souls. O Eternal Father! I offer Thee the satisfaction made—by the Sorrows of the Sacred Heart—for myself, and all poor sinners throughout the world.

RESOLUTION.

To share the grief of Jesus with loving sympathy.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

If thou didst know the things that are to thy peace.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Ninth Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

Meekness: second Beatitude.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land.—
S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Having in spirit taken our places on the mountain-side, with the disciples of Jesus, let us listen reverently to His words: *Blessed are the meek.*

II. PRELUDE

Loving Jesus, Thou desirest that Thy disciples should seek to resemble Thee; give to us therefore the knowledge and love of true meekness, which Thou didst practise so perfectly.

I. POINT.

What is meekness?

He who has the spirit of meekness, having like our Divine Example the mastery over his own heart and mind, is self-possessed under every provocation; in all circumstances, even the most trying. A perfect practice of this virtue supposes a continual spiritual combat: the emotions of the heart have to be watched over constantly; angry words have to be suppressed at the very moment they would break forth: natural impetuosity has to be calmed, directly any irritating cause arises. Meekness goes further still: it excludes from

the soul all bitterness, all impatience, all susceptibility ;—by means of it we bear tranquilly the trials God sends us ; our own infirmities of body and soul ; and the defects of our neighbour. From within, this virtue passes to the exterior ; and is perceivable in the countenance, words, and actions, —giving to all these that gentleness of expression, which renders true piety so lovable. And ought not gentleness to be apparent in those who profess to imitate Jesus Christ ? Oh ! with what care should we watch over the hidden life of the soul, so that it rightly regulate our outward conduct. True meekness is not a natural quality, or there would be little or no merit attached to it : it increases in proportion to the contradictions and trials we meet with ; and is acquired perfectly only by such as, aided by grace, fight valiantly against self. Sweet Jesus ! help us to triumph over all that is opposed to meekness, by the all-powerful assistance of Thy grace, and the force of Thy Divine example.

II. POINT.

The advantages of meekness.

The actual consequences of meekness may be certainly said to be unexpected. Humanly speaking, we should be slow to predict that this quality would ensure to its owner the right to possess anything very vast or important. And yet, in a spiritual sense, are not the meek possessors of their own heart—the heart of their neighbour—and the heart of God ? Yes, the Heart of God ! Who contemplates with pleasure the combats and the victories of the meek. He loves to incline Himself towards the good and gentle ; they are peculiarly His children. He dwells

in them, sheds abroad His grace in their souls, gives them true riches now, and hereafter an eternal inheritance : they will possess forever the good Land. They who are guided by the spirit of gentleness have *the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Where are we with regard to this excellent virtue, which adds a charm to all other virtues ? What progress have we made towards its attainment ? We sometimes see persons who profess great zeal for religion, and a strong attachment for exercises of piety, whose virtue is strangely disguised by their external demeanour. It seems in the eyes of the world to be repulsive, disagreeable, frigid, and selfish : the impression thus made by certain acts of discourtesy, and gestures of impatience—by unrestrained anger and annoyance—by a want of common politeness, is most unfavourable to the interests of religion. How opposed is any such line of conduct to the true spirit of piety ; that spirit which we find so simply enjoined in the Apostle's admonition : *Be gentle : shewing all mildness to all men.*

COLLOQUY.

Divine Author of every virtue ! I thank Thee for having taught me, by Thy lessons, and Thy example, the beauty and the advantage of meekness ; let me now begin to practise it more perfectly. In my words and my actions I desire, by the help of Thy grace, to preserve that calmness, and gentleness, which has often caused Thy true followers to exercise so benign an influence over the hearts and minds of others. Increase in me this virtue of meekness, the source of which is in Thy Sacred Heart ; that I may glorify Thee by my victories over all that is contrary to it in myself.

RESOLUTION.

To bear to-day what may be annoying and inconvenient,
in a spirit of meekness.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed are the meek : for they shall possess the land.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Ninth Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

The blessed effects of tribulation : third Beatitude.

Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

—S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

We remain, in thought, near Jesus on the mountain, and
hear Him say : *Blessed are they that mourn.*

II. PRELUDE.

Grant to us, O Lord Jesus, to comprehend the full mean-
ing of these words ; and that there is always a blessing
attached to afflictions borne for Thy Sake.

I. POINT.

Who they are to whom this third Beatitude is promised.

Blessed are they that mourn. This maxim which the world rejects, because it cannot understand its meaning, is adopted gladly by faithful souls, and forms their truest consolation. They feel that they are prone to sin, and subject to the perverse inclinations of nature : they perceive that they are far away from their own country, and in danger of not reaching it, unless they walk most warily. They witness the outrages committed against the God Whom they love, and from Whom they receive such continual benefits. Is not all this sufficient cause for lamentation ? May we not, ought we not to mourn, under such afflicting circumstances ? Tears of compunction—tears of penitence—it is these which wash away the stains of sin that we may have contracted : repentant love purifies and consoles. We may weep because our exile is still prolonged ; we may sigh because Heaven still seems so very far off : our sighs and our tears are not unheeded by Jesus, for they proceed from love for Him ; and in return He sends us peace and consolation even here, as assurances of His love for us. Tears which are the effect of true love, of sincere repentance, or profound humility, bear witness to the truth that *we are pilgrims and strangers on the earth* ; liable to fall into the perils with which we are beset, as we know by sad experience. Therefore we desire greatly that the days of our mourning may be ended : but so long as it shall please God that they shall last, let us take comfort in this thought : *They who sow in tears, shall reap in joy.*

II. POINT.

Jesus Christ and His Saints have passed their lives in affliction.

The doctrine of our Lord on the subject of affliction, is entirely confirmed by the example of His own Life, and that of the Saints. For thirty-three years our Dear Saviour endured privations and sufferings, and mourned with all the intensity of Divine sorrow, over the insults offered by sinners to the Majesty of God ; and wept and agonised because He foresaw that numberless souls would refuse to be redeemed by Him from eternal perdition. Mary, His Mother, who imitated Him in all things more closely than any other being ever did, or could, entered into His sufferings ; shared them with Him as far as it was possible : *the sword of sorrow pierced her own soul also*. If we turn to the life of each individual Apostle or Saint, is it not clear that, one and all, they have trodden the same pathway of affliction, through this valley of tears ? Do we, who have made profession to follow Jesus, expect to find our way through life all smooth, and carpeted with flowers ? And such as have retired within the precincts of the cloister—is it so that they look there for repose ? to live at their ease ? to have nothing to mourn over ? no cause for tears ? If they actually find that tribulations and trials have not followed them, or rather do not meet them there, there is cause for alarm rather than satisfaction ; and the hope might as well die out, of being comforted by Him Who said to His chosen companions : *You shall weep and lament : you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

COLLOQUY.

I adore Thee, O Divine Teacher of truth ! and thank Thee for the goodness with which Thou dost deign to instruct me. I grieve to think how often I try to escape some affliction which Thou wouldst have me bear ; and

put aside the remembrance of the affronts Thou still receivest, lest I should feel the keen edge of that sword of sorrow which pierced Thy Sacred Heart, and that of Thy Holy Mother. Let the thought of Thy own promise of comfort make me indeed not only resigned, but glad to suffer tribulation for Thy Sake.

RESOLUTION.

To bear courageously all the afflictions of this life : remembering how Jesus and all His saints have had cause to mourn.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Ninth Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

Holy desires : fourth Beatitude.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice : for they shall have their fill.—S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us take our place again amongst that privileged assembly, who hear our Lord pronouncing those blessed *that hunger and thirst after justice.*

II. PRELUDE.

Excite in our souls, O Jesus, holy desires after justice ; so that, in accordance with Thy promise, we may be nourished and satisfied with Thy goodness.

I. POINT.

Holy desires are the result of the presence of God in our souls.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice : for they shall have their fill. What is this hunger—this thirst? Nothing else but the ardent desires which the true friends of God entertain, for His glory and their own perfection. The Holy Spirit possessing them, they appreciate the merit of sanctity—the happiness of belonging entirely to God ; at the same time holy desires are excited, and increase in ardour, in proportion to their increasing love for heavenly things. Hence arises that fervent zeal which we admire in the Saints. ' One step made in the way of perfection has the effect of provoking the desire of making another : thus the more one advances, the more still one wishes to advance. As the flame attests the presence of the fire, so fervour attests the reality of the presence of holy desires in the heart. Do we truly long to attain perfection? do we crave for more grace, in order to please God better, day by day? Is our zeal with regard to our growth in holiness becoming more vigorous? Can we compare the natural hunger and thirst which we may sometimes have experienced, with our spiritual hunger and thirst? and then conscientiously claim the promise made by our Lord, and expect that He will replenish us with an abundance of grace? If not, we shall do well to humble ourselves in God's sight, begging Him to

make us understand our many needs, and to arouse in us more efficacious desires after sanctity. *Thus saith the Lord : I have inebriated the weary soul : I have filled every hungry soul.* The weary soul—the hungry soul ! Let us mark these words.

II. POINT.

The advantages of holy desires.

The soul that is full of sincere and holy desires, may be said to have unbounded power over the Heart of God, for He cannot refuse the prayers which are prompted by them. Of this we are assured by the words of the Angel, who was sent to comfort Daniel after he had fasted and mourned for three weeks : *Fear not, Daniel : thou man of desires, I am sent to thee ; for from the first day thou didst set thy heart to understand, to afflict thyself in the sight of thy God, thy words have been heard : and I am come for thy words : Fear not, O man of desires, peace be to thee : take courage and be strong.* And these same words are addressed to all, in all ages, who earnestly long to progress in virtue—to become saints, for the glory of God. He accepts these desires as prayers ; even though they may never be shaped into words. *If we hunger and thirst after justice,* we shall not walk leisurely in the path of holiness : our heart being enlarged with the desire of perfection, we shall *run in the way of God's commandments.* And what is the goal, to reach which we should be taking rapid strides ? Where is the centre of attraction, towards which we should allow ourselves to be drawn on, each day more and more swiftly ? It is nothing less than the unending Beatific Vision of our God ; with which we shall be satisfied throughout eternity. Does not

the very thought stimulate our energies, and intensify our desire to reach that special place in Heaven, and win that special crown, which Jesus has prepared for each one of us.

COLLOQUY.

Thou knowest my thoughts, O Lord ! that my hope is in Thee ! My desires stretch forth towards Heaven, and I long to behold Thee there. Attract me along the way of holiness : may I each day acquire some fresh step in virtue, so that at length *I may appear before Thy sight in justice : and be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear.* Hungering and thirsting for Thee now, let me be aided by Thy grace to prepare for the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb.

RESOLUTION.

To have only such desires as I can offer to God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice : for they shall have their fill.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Ninth Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

Mercy towards our neighbour : fifth Beatitude.

Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.—
S. MATT. V.

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 exercised would yield to its influence; and being filled
 confidence, would receive the good advice which grace
 inspire us to give. What a power—an undying power
 were in acts and words of mercy, and compassion!

II. POINT.

is to our own interest, and in the interest of justice
 we should exercise mercy.

Let us be merciful to those who need our mercy, so that
 may draw down upon ourselves the Divine mercy.
have we that we have not received? Everything that is
 in us we owe to the mercy of God; and we are still in
 of many other graces, which He alone can bestow.
 are told by our Lord that the measure of our merciful-
 is towards others, will be the measure wherewith God will
 portion to us His gifts of mercy. *Shouldst thou not have
 compassion on thy fellow-servant even as I have had com-
 passion on thee?* And further, is it not just that we should bear
 with the defects of others most patiently? It may be they
 unwittingly try our patience; we perhaps give cause for annoy-
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I. PRELUDE.

To-day we have another declaration from the lips of the Divine Oracle to consider: we hear Him saying: *Blessed are the merciful.*

II. PRELUDE.

O most Merciful Heart of Jesus, teach us how to acquire and practise that characteristic virtue of hearts truly devoted to Thee: the virtue of mercy.

I. POINT.

The love of Jesus Christ, and zeal for His glory, should excite us to the practice of mercy towards others.

If we love Jesus our Adorable Saviour really, we ought to desire to be agreeable to Him: if we are animated by His Divine Spirit we must necessarily desire to procure His glory. An infallible means of attaining this double purpose, is the exercising of that tenderness and clemency of which Jesus has given, and still gives, such touching examples. Yes! we shall please the Heart of God, when He sees us practising in regard of our neighbour generally—and especially towards any person who may have wronged us, or made us suffer—that indulgence which the Divine Master uniformly shewed towards His Disciples, notwithstanding their imperfections. If we imitated Him in that tender compassion to which He was moved, at the sight of the infirmities or the necessities of the unfortunate; in that unvarying gentleness towards the weak, and that unspeakable goodness towards penitent sinners, which we cannot fail to see displayed by our Lord, our neighbour would be drawn to enter the service

of a Master whose followers were so merciful and kind. Discovering evident proofs of our charity, they on whom it was exercised would yield to its influence; and being filled with confidence, would receive the good advice which grace might inspire us to give. What a power—an undying power—is there in acts and words of mercy, and compassion!

II. POINT.

It is to our own interest, and in the interest of justice that we should exercise mercy.

Let us be merciful to those who need our mercy, so that we may draw down upon ourselves the Divine mercy. *What have we that we have not received?* Everything that is good in us we owe to the mercy of God; and we are still in need of many other graces, which He alone can bestow. We are told by our Lord that the measure of our mercifulness towards others, will be the measure wherewith God will apportion to us His gifts of mercy. *Shouldst thou not have compassion on thy fellow-servant even as I have had compassion on thee?* And further, is it not just that we should bear with the defects of others most patiently? It may be they unwittingly try our patience; we perhaps give cause for annoyance, even deliberately. Have we no need of indulgence? We ought never to forget that we have our own failings; if others sometimes make us suffer, how often do we not give suffering? We hope to obtain that which we ask, in the oft-repeated petition: *Lord! have mercy on us*: if denied, what could we expect, but that stern justice would take its course and condemn us? *For judgment without mercy, to him that hath done no mercy*, is the unalterable decree of God. Let us question our thoughts, our words, our actions, on this

point most searchingly; for we see clearly how much depends upon the verdict our conscience gives.

COLLOQUY.

I adore, O my God, Thine infinite mercy, in bearing with the numberless offences of sinners, with which each hour, each moment is laden. And my own defects are amongst them! How justly art Thou called the God of Mercy: be Thou ever blessed and praised for all the clemency and compassion Thou hast displayed in my regard. May the remembrance of this fill me with such a real sense of gratitude, that I may prove it by shewing mercy to others, especially to such as have injured me;—forgiving all, even as I hope to be forgiven by Thee.

RESOLUTION.

To shew a constant readiness to forgive.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Ninth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

Purity of Heart: sixth Beatitude.

Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.—
S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Happy to be further instructed in the school of Jesus Christ, let us still remain on the mountain and be taught by Him to know that : *Blessed are the clean of heart.*

II. PRELUDE.

Heart of Jesus, infinite Source of all purity, deign to make us comprehend how great a degree of purity is necessary, if we would please Thee here, and see Thee hereafter.

I. POINT.

The happiness of pure hearts.

A pure heart is one that, out of love for purity, rejects with extreme carefulness all that might tarnish the beauty of this virtue : a heart watchful over its every movement, so that it may suffer nothing to gain entrance therein which could in any way be displeasing to God : it hates all sin, and admits no other affection but that which it has for its Divine Possessor. Such hearts are truly happy : exempt from the servitude of the world, unshackled by mere human attachments, they are free to serve God, without impediment. And the All-holy God takes delight in such as have consecrated themselves to His love, and He communicates Himself to them. The promise that they shall see Him is fulfilled, in part, even in this life ; for God shews Himself, by imparting a clearer and more intimate knowledge to them of His Divine perfections. And, that eternal happiness is reserved for them, there is not a shadow of doubt ; is it not this assurance which has led so many to forsake the allurements of the world, and relinquish all claims to earthly

and imperfect affection ; thereby to ensure the pure delights of God's Friendship here, and the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision in Heaven. What vigilance can be too great, what fidelity too extreme, where the eternal consequences are so momentous ! Purity of heart gives us a right to see God, Face to face. Shall we forego it ?

II. POINT.

From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves, says the Apostle.

Weak in purpose and naturally feeble in the practice of virtue, it would be impossible for us, without the Divine assistance, to attain to that degree of cleanness of heart which our Lord God demands of us : but the infinite grace of perfect pureness which flows from the Heart of Jesus is, so to speak, at our disposal ; and thence we may draw the supply we need. In the Sacrifice of the Altar, from the Sacred Heart flows *the Wine which maketh Virgins*, inebriating them with spiritual delight, and purifying their affections. To gain or preserve the angelic virtue nothing is more effectual than the participation in the Communion of the Precious Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, either actually or spiritually ; by which means *the whole spirit, and soul, and body, is preserved blameless*, in such as avail themselves aright of this Divine privilege.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, Divine Spouse of all pure souls, I will not be so indifferent to Thy promise, that I shall see God if only I keep my heart free from all evil affections. Give me a yet more lively horror of all sin ; may I banish each idle thought,

each vain imagination as it presents itself; and seek to be free from every motion of pride and envy. Fortify me against the attacks of Satan, who desires to tarnish my soul, and deprive me of those virtues which Thou lovest best. Most pure Virgin-Mother of Jesus, pray for me; that I may never fall into any fault, which might endanger my hope of one day seeing God as He is.

RESOLUTION.

Often to ask God to keep my soul from all evil.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Ninth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

The Spirit of Peaceableness: seventh Beatitude.

Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.—S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us, with much recollection, remain on the mountain, listening to the words of our Divine Teacher: He now pronounces these: *Blessed are the peace-makers.*

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, God of peace ! deign to give to us that spirit of peace with which Thou desirest Thy disciples should be filled, and thus become the children of the Heavenly Father.

I. POINT.

The advantages of the spirit of peace.

This pacific spirit is a boon so precious, that by Him, Who is the Eternal Wisdom, it was placed amongst the Beatitudes. Let us see in what it consists, and what are its fruits. Peaceableness is a tendency of the soul, which renders it calm and self-possessed ; disposes it for increasing union with God, because all elements of disunion, impatience, and trouble, are repressed by its gentle influence. Seeing what our duties are, it causes us quietly to comply with their demands, however difficult they may appear ; for the spirit of calmness holds its sway, and reigns undisturbedly within us. However unreasonable and exacting our neighbour may happen to be, there is no reason to be disquieted : it is wiser far to remain at peace with him. Have we no experience here to fall back upon, either as a warning or encouragement ? All this supposes a true self-abnegation, a great love for God, and much charity towards others. And then, what inestimable advantages are procured to us, if we are the happy possessors of this spirit of peace. Already peace-makers may be reckoned amongst the number of the blessed. Nothing really troubles nor depresses them ; trying circumstances cannot disturb their equanimity : not because they are stoical, but simply on account of the truth of the

prophet's words, which they realise : *The work of justice shall be peace, and the service of justice quietness, and security for ever. Thus saith the Lord: My people shall sit in the beauty of peace, and in the tabernacle of confidence, and in wealthy rest.* Do we recognise in ourselves the fruits of holy peace? Deeply considering its import let us often use the prayer : *May the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

II. POINT.

According to the example of Jesus Christ, we should be peace-makers.

At the Birth of our Lord, the Angels proclaimed that He came on earth in the character of Peace-Maker between God and man. It was for this one end that He embraced labour and suffering; that He laid aside His royal robe of glory, and clothed Himself with the garment of ignominy. His whole work on earth was to effect a reconciliation, and at what a cost to Him was it effected! Peace is endeared to us a thousand-fold by these considerations. In the midst of His immediate followers Jesus was the Peace-Maker; putting an end to their disputes, appeasing their minds when differences or vexations arose. How imperfect is our conduct with regard to the maintaining of peace! How often we may accuse ourselves of fomenting, instead of allaying strife; Our anger is all too easily aroused; our selfishness asserts itself so readily; our habit of complaining creates annoyance; a disagreement exists, and we half admit to ourselves that we have helped to promote it, but we are too proud to retract. And the consequence is, that discord grows—and we are responsible. *Can we be called the chil-*

dren of God, while this state of things continues? And further still, if we are truly peace-makers, we shall be perpetuating the mission of Jesus constantly, by making peace between enemies; by pointing out some way of ending contentions; in clearing up misunderstandings; and above all, by pleading with God, for the reconciliation of sinners with Himself, through the merits of the Cross of His Dear Son.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, Who art so justly styled the Prince of Peace, grant me, I beseech Thee, that peace which surpasseth all understanding, and which Thou didst come into the world to secure to men of goodwill. Keep me from ever again sowing seeds of discord, by any unguarded word; or by my conduct arousing any element of strife. Some there are who are angels of peace on earth; who carry on Thy work of reconciliation. Would that I might prove myself worthy to be called a child of God, because of my endeavours to be a peace-maker.

RESOLUTION.

To promote peace in myself, and amongst others, as far as I possibly can.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.**The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican.**

Two men went up into the temple to pray : the one a pharisee, and the other a publican ; The pharisee standing prayed thus with himself : O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican ; I fast twice in a week ; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican standing afar off would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven ; but struck his breast, saying : O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say to you, this man went down into his house justified rather than the other ; because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled : and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—S. LUKE XVIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us go in spirit to the Temple at Jerusalem, and there see the pharisee congratulating himself on his good works—and the publican humbly asking mercy of God.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, perfect Pattern of humility, grant us grace to profit by the example Thou putttest before us in this parable of the publican who was justified before God.

I. POINT.

Pride is opposed to Christian perfection.

Our Divine Master made known the chief characteristics

of pride, in speaking of the conduct of the pharisee, that we may be inspired with real hatred for that which is the root of all sin. Full of self-esteem and of confidence in his own supposed merits, this proud man presents himself with assurance before God in His Temple: his whole bearing, his walk, his gestures, his looks, his words bespeak the good opinion he entertains of himself; and the disdain he has for others. Are our actions, our words never the counterpart of his? What a contrast between the name we bear as Disciples of the Meek and Humble Saviour, and our conduct, if we are in any way imitating this pharisee. To what danger is not our salvation exposed in such a case? Let us, while picturing this scene in the temple, examine our hearts to see if we therein cannot trace some sentiments which resemble his; if our outward demeanour does not partake sometimes of the presumptuous assurance of his; is there no self-sufficiency in our words, which may remind us of his vain boasting? If so, there is not a moment to be lost!—let us shake off all connexion with this proud pharisee; and go and seek to associate with the publican, and humble ourselves in God's sight.

II. POINT.

The virtue of humility pleases God; and gains hearts, notwithstanding its desire of being hidden.

This is what Jesus teaches us in this parable, concerning the publican: his humility was so pleasing to God, that although he entered the temple guilty of sin, he left it pardoned and justified. Nothing is more edifying than the practice of this virtue in one who is really humble, and modest in his opinion of himself. If we are deeply pene-

trated with a sense of our unworthiness, we offer to God that which He cannot refuse—the homage of a humble, contrite heart. Far from imagining that we see some good in ourselves that is not there, we ascribe to Him all the good that we may possess. The low estimation we have of ourselves will be unconsciously evinced by our words, our looks, our general demeanour; and the Presence of God in our hearts manifested thereby continually. What power over others humility has, to draw them to God, and to a love of virtue! It is always preaching a simple but effective sermon; often mute, yet always eloquent. How often does its presence cause some display of vanity or frivolity—some idle, ungracious words, to cease. And not only is it in itself a power: it is an ornament which should adorn especially the Spouses of Jesus; recognisable to all with whom they come in contact. It is a preservative against the contagion of evil; a charm to attract all hearts. Do we carry about with us this charm—this preservative? Can we do otherwise than pray by the side of the publican? Perhaps our pride may condemn us more before God than did his sins, and on that account we have greater need to put ourselves in the last place; to look down into the humbling recesses of our proud hearts, and say: *O God, be merciful to me a sinner.*

COLLOQUY.

O my Jesus, Whose humility has attracted so many hearts to Thyself, and exercised so wonderful a power over the lives of Thy Saints, strengthen my feeble desires to acquire this beautiful virtue more thoroughly. Let me never, never pride myself on my supposed merits, knowing that I have none of which to boast. I make my choice to-day to draw near to the poor sinner, who dared not believe himself worthy

even to lift up his eyes to Heaven ; and I confess with him my great need of Thy mercy, for I have sinned against Thee, O my God.

RESOLUTION.

To exercise myself in the actual practice of humility.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

O God, be merciful to me a sinner.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

The advantages of persecution : eighth Beatitude.

Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake : for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.—S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Jesus is about to pronounce the next and last Beatitude. Let us pay attention to His words : *Blessed are they that suffer for justice' sake.*

II. PRELUDE.

Fill us with Thy Spirit, O Jesus, so that if our devotion to Thyself draw down upon us the world's disapproval, or any kind of persecution, we may esteem ourselves happy to suffer for justice' sake.

I. POINT.

It is a great privilege to suffer in the cause of God.

To convince ourselves of this fact, we have but to consider the way in which our Lord enlarged upon this last Beatitude: *Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My Sake: Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in Heaven.* It is to His faithful ones Jesus thus addresses Himself; to those whose holy lives condemn the world's irreligion and profanity. If we are such, we must expect to meet with persecution from the enemies of our Lord: *The servant is not above His Master: If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you,* He said. We should therefore prepare ourselves for this, knowing that we shall not escape tribulation; and that we are expected, by Him Who has forewarned us of it, to suffer according to the Will of God. Saint Chrysostom affirms that to be permitted to endure unjust persecution is the highest of all favours; and that the crown to be won through it, will be the most brilliant of all the heavenly crowns. What honour can be greater than to be associated with the holy Apostles, and other Martyrs and Confessors, in suffering for love of their Master and ours? A bond of union is established between us and them by this means. When bound in prison, and when in the midst of cruel torments, they praised God for permitting that they should be persecuted wrongfully for His Name's sake. Do we shrink from such trials of our faith and love? If we are so cowardly, it is surely because we forget that the opportunity is presented to us of winning, not only the favour but the thanks of our Master. *If doing well, you suffer patiently, this is thankworthy before God.*

II. POINT.

In what the happiness of those who suffer for justice' sake further consists.

In saying that it will prove a happiness to suffer for Him, Jesus gives us the reason of this: that the Kingdom of Heaven will be the reward of these trials. And is not such a prize sufficient to excite our emulation? But there is yet another recompense to be enjoyed even in this life, that is, the resemblance which will be formed between ourselves and the Saint of saints, together with the privilege of testifying our devotedness to Him. Jesus multiplies indeed the proofs of His love for such as suffer in His cause, and increases in them the desire to labour and endure in the face of obstacles, in the midst of opposition. "Humiliation and persecution form a nourishment little relished by the many; but it pleased our Master—why do we not like it better?" asks an old writer. Let us seek to know, *why* we do not like it better. If we are true Christians, ought not *the world to be crucified to us, and we crucified to the world?* If it were entirely so, we should (as Saint Francis de Sales says) "bear our little persecutions with more patience; satisfied that they are most salutary in their effects—those of strengthening and confirming us in virtue—and that it is in many ways good for us to suffer contempt, and unjust reproaches. These serve to raise a barrier against vanity and pride, which otherwise might take possession of the garden of our soul, and cause the plants of piety to perish." But shall we be accounted worthy to suffer persecution as the Saints have suffered, if we cannot bear to be misunderstood in the slightest degree?—to be rebuked without

cause?—to be slighted or wronged by those from whom, perhaps, we may expect different treatment? Can we then be accounted worthy? No, not yet!

COLLOQUY.

I adore Thee, O Lord Jesus, as the Strength of the Martyrs, and the Source of courage in all those who suffer for love of Thy holy Name. Bestow on me also both strength and courage, that I may never shrink from confessing Thee, although by so doing I incur the enmity of Thy persecutors—the world and the devil. Make me ready and willing to endure humiliation, opposition, and persecution, even unto death, rather than forsake Thy cause. And let me offer Thee proofs of my desire to suffer for love of Thee, by bearing well the lesser trials and temptations of my every-day life.

RESOLUTION.

Gladly to endure unjust treatment for the love of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

*Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake :
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

Jesus predicts the unhappiness of the lovers of this world.

Woe to you that are rich : for you have your consolation. Woe to you that are filled : for you shall hunger. Woe to you that now laugh : for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when men shall bless you : for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets.—S. LUKE VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus, as He pronounced these words of threatening against those who seek their happiness in transitory things.

II. PRELUDE.

O God ! Thou hast shewn us the vanity of the world and its pleasures ; enable us by the help of Thy grace to fly its allurements more and more.

I. POINT.

That we must never cease to be on our guard against the spirit of the world.

Jesus, in uttering these menaces against the children of the world who, as it were, are content to play with its empty vanities, and wile away their time amidst its trifles, is desirous of impressing His Disciples with the importance

of coming entirely out from amongst them. He has just been tracing out the way of true happiness ; and then He warns His followers against the spirit of the world, which eventually destroys its votaries. He points out that through riches many are lost eternally, on account of their attachment to them,—that luxurious living is the cause of degeneracy,—that immoderate laughter and frivolity put the very remembrance of God away to a great distance,—lastly, that vain praises fill the heart with dangerous pride. Therefore to avoid all these perils, Jesus calls us away from that which might draw us near them ; and wills to inspire us with a preference for all that is contrary to worldliness. Well may we love holy poverty, for though it impose privations, at the same time it secures to those who practise it, imperishable riches ! Well may we esteem ourselves happy in leading a mortified life, for at the eternal Banquet we shall be abundantly satisfied ! Shall we not strive to shun dissipation, and to remain always in the Presence of God ? Is it not wise to despise earthly applause, and to prefer all that tends to keep us humble ; like Jesus and Mary, who could not be affected by the opinion of the world ? Thanks be to God, for having *called us out of its darkness, into the marvellous light* of a religious life.

II. POINT.

What we ought to do to increase in spirituality.

The more affection we have for any person, the more we adopt his sentiments. If, therefore, we truly love our Lord, and desire to be filled with His Spirit, we shall be increasingly engaged in making His sentiments our own. When Jesus gains the heart, love effects a real conversion ;

and it becomes so enamoured of sanctity of life, that by the force of holy aspirations the Divine Spirit is drawn to take up His abode therein. If it be so with us, worldly illusions will be dispelled ; the trifles of the earth will appear to us in all their nothingness ; and we shall esteem God only—His goodness and His grace. All the world's apparent magnificence will be little appreciated by those who, being truly spiritual in heart and mind, perceive the beauty of God's perfections, and are drawn to the contemplation of the splendour of the Eternal City, where all the Saints shall reign with Christ for ever. Are we so full of love for God, that the spirit of the world cannot enter our hearts ? are our thoughts free from it ? is our conversation ? our behaviour ? Are we really endeavouring to be as unworldly as our Saviour and His holy Mother were ? Can Jesus say of us : *They are not of the world ; as I also am not of the world ?*

COLLOQUY.

Remove far from me all worldliness, O my God ; for I do indeed desire to be entirely free from its baneful influence. May my love for Jesus cause me to adopt His views regarding the pleasures this earth affords, and the vanity of all transitory things. Draw away from them my affections, by the attraction of Thy grace ; and fix them on heavenly things. Oh ! that they may never be wasted on perishable objects, through any undue attachment for them. Let me care only to win Thy approbation, O God, and that Thou mayest number me amongst those who are in the world—but not of it.

RESOLUTION.

To banish the spirit of the world from my heart more entirely.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world.

PRAYER.

Our Father and Hail Mary.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

The salt of the earth—a simile.

You are the salt of the earth : But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted ? It is good for nothing any more ; but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men.—
ST. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Jesus often makes use of some simile to enforce His teaching. Let us listen to the one He here draws, for our instruction and profit, about the salt of the earth.

II. PRELUDE.

Make us to understand, O Lord, Thy manner of instructing us ; and impress on our minds the lesson Thou wouldst convey to us in saying : *You are the salt of the earth.*

I. POINT.

We ought to be the salt of the earth.

Salt possesses two essential properties, which as our

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Divine Master would demonstrate, symbolise exactly the effects which the presence of His true servants ought to produce in the world. Salt, in the first place, savours all with which it enters unto combination ; and in the next, it preserves it from becoming corrupt.—So the good, who have the Spirit of Jesus, have a power over those with whom they come in contact ; and communicate to them an esteem for virtue, and a desire to participate in its excellence : besides, they preserve them by the moral and religious influence they possess, from the corruption of actual wickedness. They who are the *salt of the earth*, by their mere example, correct vices and defects ; and inspire others with a horror of sin and a love of holiness. They to whom our Lord addressed directly these words : *You are the salt of the earth*, were charged with a sublime mission : and if we would be worthy to receive these words, as addressed to us also, we must be ready to prove ourselves His true servants—to use the graces He bestows on us for the benefit of others—to make Him known and loved—to extend His kingdom in the world. How are we acquitting ourselves of our charge ? We have doubtless offered our services to Him unreservedly : how are we keeping our promise to be faithful to the grace of our vocation ?

II. POINT.

The uselessness of salt, if it lose its efficacy.

It is possible for those, whom our Lord would have to be *the salt of the earth*, to become useless in His service ; therefore He proceeds in His discourse to warn His Disciples against tepidity, indifference, the loss of the vigour of faith, or of the fervour of divine Love, by shewing that salt

may lose its virtue. If we fail in our usefulness, it is not only to ourselves that the injury is done, but also to others. In elucidating these words : *if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?* Saint Chrysostom says : “ One fervent apostle—one full of zeal—might convert a million sinners ; but should he lose his fervour, a million saints could not reanimate it”. How terrible will those consequences be that will fall on such as prove unfaithful to their calling, is implied distinctly in the words our Lord adds : *Such unseasoned salt is good for nothing any more, but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men.* Cast out of God’s favour—and then despised by men : for instead of converting sinners, they who were the salt of the earth will have been perverted by them. If we discover in ourselves any tendency to fall away from our first fervour, let us quickly look into the cause of this ;—if we find we have at all disedified others, especially any to whom we are bound to give a good example, let us at once make amends :—if we have scandalized our neighbour, let not our acts of reparation come too late. That we may be preserved from becoming as a cast-away—unfit for the Master’s service—it behoves us to live very close to Him : and concerning our intercourse with others, often to take counsel of Him.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, Who looking upon Thy Disciples didst say to them : *You are the salt of the earth*, I call to mind the fact that Judas was amongst them. He did not take heed to Thy warning ; Thy own chosen Apostle became worse than unprofitable. To Thee, O my Dear Saviour, do I turn for help to enable me to persevere in well-doing. Preserve me from the vice and corruption of the world ; keep me alive

to the dangers by which I am surrounded, and from relying on my own strength : may I not fail to edify others in our daily intercourse ; but serve Thee in serving them.

RESOLUTION.

To do my best to edify others by my words and actions.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

My disciples are the salt of the earth.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

Fidelity in little things.

He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater : and he that is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater.—S. LUKE XVI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us receive from the Lips of Him Who is Truth itself, His precept on fidelity in little things.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, Who dost shew such goodness to Thy Disciples in calling them to perfection, deign to make us understand that there is nothing little in Thy service—all in it is necessarily great and holy.

I. POINT.

There is no matter of indifference nor of insignificance in the service of God.

All that comes from God, all that leads to Him, is of sovereign importance, and most worthy of our respect. Therefore all the least points of our Rule of Life (being so many lesser but real graces,) are of infinite value to us, because they emanate from God; and the measure of His liberality ordinarily corresponds with the amount of faithfulness with which we use these lesser graces. They who despise them, deserve to be deprived of greater favours. Following out this argument, we become convinced that our sanctity and perfection depend on our fidelity in little things: perfection is the result of daily and faithful correspondence to all the movements of grace. How will it be possible to make great progress in holiness, if one has not the courage to take the easier steps? God gives us clearly to understand, that by the smallest action we may please Him as much as by the most important—that in the doing of the one or the other we may equally merit His approval. As by the commission of little faults we fall imperceptibly, but surely, into great ones, so by the exercise of little virtues, we arrive by degrees at the practice of the most

heroic. Who knows, for instance, but that just the simple observance of a rule of silence, or of religious modesty, may not be raising a soul to a high degree of spirituality? Or that the care taken to reject wandering thoughts in prayer, may not lead to the commencement of sublime contemplation? On our fidelity in disengaging the heart from affections which are too human, depends the deepening in it of divine love: is our love for God only superficial still?

II. POINT.

They who despise small faults, fall into graver ones.

Having seen the perfection to which constant fidelity to lesser graces can raise the soul, let us consider how habitual indifference about slight faults may—in fact, is certain to cause us, little by little, to fall into more serious ones. This downfall will not be sudden; vices, like virtues, grow gradually. One does not all at once descend into the mire of mortal sins; nor ascend to the summit of perfection at a bound. *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ*, says Saint Peter. A warning, giving the sad contrast, is embodied in these words: *Whoso contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little*. Thus, during our religious exercises, if we do not put away wandering thoughts as soon as we are conscious of them, we are leaving the door of our hearts ajar, and it will open wider presently to admit more dangerous ones. So if we neglect to hallow all we do with a good intention, we shall soon lose sight of higher motives, and our actions will be valueless—according to God's judgment of them. One little fault cannot overthrow us by its own weight; but a multitude of them may overpower us. They will help one

another to strengthen the passions, to weaken spiritual vigour, to raise up obstacles in the way of God's grace. In fine, voluntary faults—ever so small—in one who has been the special object of His love and favour, are an injury to the Heart of Jesus.

COLLOQUY.

My God ! how careless I am about my many imperfections. How little notice do I take of them in my daily examen of conscience. I have resolved again and again to be more circumspect, and yet I fear they multiply beyond all conception. I have indeed reason to humble myself for my want of fidelity in this matter ; and to be sorry on account of the little progress I have consequently made in the way of perfection. May I henceforth avail myself better of each grace Thou bestowest on me ; and do Thou help me, O Source of Light, to discover more clearly my lesser faults.

RESOLUTION.

To avoid and correct my imperfections, for the love of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

Punishment of scandal : Recompense of zeal.

He therefore that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven : But he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.—S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

To-day we hear our Lord continuing His Sermon on the Mount, and pronouncing a threat against such as give scandal ; but a promise of reward to such as are zealous in His cause.

II. PRELUDE.

Preserve us, O God, from the misfortune of giving scandal to others, but grant that, on the contrary, we may procure an increase of Thy glory, by our zeal for souls.

I. POINT.

What an affliction it is to the Heart of Jesus, if by our bad example we deter souls from serving Him aright.

After having consecrated ourselves to the service of God, it must needs be a grievous injury to Him, if we turn away from the observance of His holy law ; the injury is greatly aggravated however, if others are led to transgress it also, by our bad example. God may have specially chosen us to

use our influence, our talents, our time, in serving Him in His Church. If, therefore, we break His commandments, and leave others to suppose that the obligation to keep, perhaps the least seemingly important ones, is not so strict after all, are we not in some sense imitating the serpent in the garden of Eden, when he said to Eve: *Why hath God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree of paradise?* We, in effect, give rise, by our own failure in obedience and fidelity, to questionings: Why be so very careful on this or that point, when they who are held up as examples do not appear to be careful at all? and so our negligence forms the excuse for many and many a sin. In speaking, we forget the law of charity: the mischief does not end with ourselves, for our unkind words are repeated, and God's commandment is broken, through the bad teaching of one whose example should edify, and not lead astray. We can multiply instances for ourselves, relative to outward failures in duty; and see how far we come under the condemnation of our Lord, where He says: *Woe to him through whom scandals come.*

II. POINT.

A great reward is promised to such as aid in the saving of souls.

He that shall do and teach, shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. The Divine Master gave His Disciples, by means of this promise, an idea of the recompense which would crown their labours and their zeal for the salvation of souls. And may we not take this promise to ourselves? To aid in rescuing one, whom He has redeemed by His Precious Blood from hell—to assist a single soul to

reach heaven, is (according to the sentiments of the Loving Heart of Jesus) doing more than as if we had spared Him the torments of His Passion. Is it then a matter of astonishment that He grants such a magnificent recompense to His zealous co-operators in a work, so unspeakably dear to Himself? And there is a further motive of encouragement in the consideration that our labours are so blessed by God; that their consequences are recognised by Him—to our eternal advantage—ages after we personally have finished our work on earth. How much a faithful, zealous labourer may do to promote the Heavenly Master's glory, we know from the promise of eternal reward being given to those who convert even one from the error of his way. And they that are learned in the law of God and of true wisdom *shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity.* They who have taught God's law, either by word, or example, or in any other manner, will assuredly be great in the Kingdom of Heaven. O greatness worthy of pious envy! Have we not, each one of us, means at our command of acquiring this immortal glory? and can we be insensible to its attractiveness? or lose it, although within our reach? Rather will we do all in our power to the satisfying of the desires of the Sacred Heart, by helping souls to reach their heavenly inheritance.

COLLOQUY.

Yes, my Jesus, I will work with renewed ardour to make Thee known and loved. Thy example and Thy words of encouragement fill me with the desire of doing my utmost to save souls, who may glorify Thee through all eternity. Many motives unite to make me take the resolution of *doing and teaching* Thy holy law more unweariedly; but the

chief motive is gratitude to Thee for having given me this work to do. Keep me, by Thy grace, from ever scandalizing one of Thy children. Give me Thy blessing, as I go forth to labour for Thee.

RESOLUTION.

By doing, to teach the law of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He that shall do and teach, shall be great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

PRAYER.

Our Father and Hail Mary.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

On understanding the things of God.

He that hath ears to hear let him hear : And the Disciples asked what the parable JESUS had spoken might be : To whom He said : To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.—S. LUKE VIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus, having just finished speaking a parable to the people : He proceeded to explain it to His Disciples when alone with them.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Lord, to gain from this meditation a great desire to receive from Thee a clearer understanding concerning the things of God.

I. POINT.

The understanding of His Word is a special gift of God.

The power of understanding matters which concern our salvation is one of the greatest gifts God can bestow. This understanding consists not in having a mere human and speculative knowledge of His holy Word—for this may be acquired by study, without the aid of grace: it is a clear interior enlightenment, which influences the heart at the same time that it illumines the mind; and gives strength to the will, to carry into effect the good which the intelligence approves. This light is not communicated to all men alike: a wicked mind is closed to it, for it is a personal grace of the Holy Spirit, and He cannot dwell in the midst of iniquity. But when a sinner begins to repent, God enlightens his eyes with the first gleam of this sacred light; by which he sees the fearful condition of his soul, the hideousness of his vices, hell open at his feet, and Heaven afar off. If he be faithful to this first grace, sentiments of confidence and love will succeed to the dread fear which has been awakened; his intelligence, yet more purified by the grace of the Sacraments, will begin to understand the goodness of God, and he will find happiness in following the way of His precepts. The wonders produced in pure souls by this divine light is yet more striking, if possible: they are led

on, from one degree of illuminating grace to another, until they obtain that knowledge of the secrets of God's power and love, which is bestowed even here, as a reward for past and present fidelity in obeying His inspirations. Oh! how most excellent are the effects of the light of grace! How unspeakable is our privilege, if Jesus has said to us as to His chosen Apostles: *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

II. POINT.

It is the true disciples of Jesus who possess the gift of Understanding.

After our Divine Master had finished speaking a parable to the multitude, He went aside, and the Apostles, finding themselves alone with Him, asked the meaning of it. Let us then suppose that we have been permitted to join their company, and therefore may take to ourselves these words of gracious assurance: *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.* If we are His true followers, Jesus reserves for us the privilege of a special explanation of His words—of a special illumination—bearing upon the points of His general instruction given to the world at large. We must take care how we hear the Word of God, and that we bring fruits from meditating upon it. The more attentive we are in making our meditation, the more faithful we are in keeping our good resolutions, the more will the Divine Master Himself make known to us His designs in our regard, and discover to us the treasures of His grace. So will our spiritual joy and happiness augment day by day; as, alone with Him, we shall be learning the mysterious lessons of His love. In His

infinite goodness He has chosen us ; and asked of us that we will go aside from the world with Him, and in the solitude of holy recollection, listen to what He desires to communicate to us. *Apart He explained all things to His Disciples.* Are we as attentive as we ought to be, to the Voice of Jesus, speaking in the depths of our heart ?

COLLOQUY.

With deepest gratitude, and feeling how unworthy I am of Thy goodness, I thank and praise Thee, O Bridegroom of my soul, for the lessons Thou dost impart to me as I meditate upon Thy Word. Enlighten me more and more, and shew me where I am not corresponding as I ought, with the spiritual favours Thou bestowest. *May I take heed how I hear Thy Voice,* and obey it with reverence, and promptitude, and exactness. Reveal to me more fully the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven ; and grant that ere long I may speak with Thee Face to face.

RESOLUTION.

To pray often for the illuminating grace of the Spirit of Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

Eleventh Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

Jesus cures a man who is deaf and dumb.

Going out of the coasts of Tyre, Jesus came by Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis ; And they bring to Him one deaf and dumb ; and they besought Him that He would lay His hand upon him ; And taking him from the multitude apart, He put His fingers into his ears, and spitting, He touched his tongue : And looking up to heaven, He groaned, and said to him : Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened ; And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right.—
S. MARK VII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus, as He looked with compassion on the deaf and dumb man.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Jesus, with regard to spiritual things our souls are often affected with deafness and dumbness ; deign to deliver us, by some of the many means of doing so which Thou hast at Thy command.

I. POINT.

The outward means used by Jesus to effect the cure of this afflicted man.

We see that Jesus was being accompanied by many of His disciples on His journey through the coasts of Decapolis, when some of them observing a man who could neither speak nor hear, led him forthwith to their Lord. They knew full well His readiness to cure any case they brought under His notice, they confided entirely in His power to do good. On this occasion He appears to wish to draw our attention to the fact that He works miracles through definite, simple, outward means,—visible signs of invisible grace. Jesus leads this poor man out of the crowd that had gathered round: to inspire him with greater awe and a deeper sense of the value of God's gifts which he demanded. He distinguishes this miracle by the performing of several mysterious acts. How does this use of ceremonial on the part of our Lord teach us to observe with reverence those outward acts, which form part of our religious duties; for each one symbolises with deep significance, some Catholic verity. Saint Gregory explains that when our Lord put His Fingers into the ears which before were void of the sense of hearing, He typified that Understanding is a gift which proceeds from Himself, and which He has a Divine right to withhold or to bestow. O Jesus! we beseech Thee, touch our souls, so that when Thou speakest, we may at all times, hear and understand Thy Voice. . . . Again, we must not only hear, but also be able to speak to God; and to others, for their edification. And if, of ourselves, we know not even what to pray for, still less do we know how to speak aright, unless our tongues and lips be anointed with the grace of wisdom.

Jesus put His Fingers into his ears, and spitting, He touched his tongue. Give to our tongues, O Lord, the unction of Thy grace, that we may ever be praising Thee.

II. POINT.

Jesus prayed as Man, and commanded as God.

We are told that the earnestness of the prayer of Jesus on behalf of this man, was observable in His actions: He groaned as He looked up to Heaven. He sighed—for He considered that he who was deaf and dumb represented all too painfully, the condition of the Jewish nation, of whom Isaias had thus prophesied: *The heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears they have been dull of hearing. Who is deaf but they to whom I have sent my messengers? . . . There is none that calleth upon My Name.* O Lord! have we given Thee cause to grieve over our insensibility? our slowness of speech in prayer? our dulness of understanding when hearing Thy word? If the faculties of our soul be closed, so as in any degree to prevent the operations of the Blessed Spirit therein, say to us, O Jesus, as Thou didst to the deaf and dumb man—Ephpheta! O sigh of Jesus, in thee, what efficacy! O word of Divine power, what miracles hast thou wrought! Plead for us, O Son of Mary, to the Heavenly Father, now that Thou art at His Right Hand: command us, O Son of God, that our understanding may be opened to accept divine truths; with our mouth will we proclaim *that Thou dost all things well. We will extol Thee, our King, and bless Thy Name for ever and ever: we will publish the memory of the abundance of Thy sweetness.*

COLLOQUY.

O my Saviour, my Advocate with the Father, I beseech Thee to heal the infirmities of my soul, and to plead with God that the gift of His pardoning grace may descend upon me. Let me not be deprived of the happiness of hearing Thy Voice ; nor hindered, by neglect in seeking Thy grace, from glorifying Thee in all I say. Without Thy succour I can neither hear nor speak aright. Keep me from putting any obstacle to the operation of the Holy Spirit's influence in my soul.

RESOLUTION.

To go to Jesus for grace, to hear His Voice, and speak in His honour.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He hath done all things well.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Eleventh Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

On the law of fraternal charity.

I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment : And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council : And

whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.
. . . . Forgive, and you shall be forgiven: Give, and it
shall be given to you: good measure and pressed down, and
shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your
bosom.—S. MATT. V. . . . S. LUKE VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us take our place again on the mountain near to our Lord, and listen to His precepts concerning charity towards our neighbour.

II, PRELUDE.

O Good Master, fill us with Thy Divine Spirit, so that practising charity in accordance with Thy desire, we may merit the reward Thou hast attached to it.

I. POINT.

The grievousness of faults contrary to charity.

Charity towards our neighbour is the principal point in every Christian code of laws; and we are bound by them, before all things, to practise this charity with continual care. In establishing the code of the rules of perfection, our Lord began by recommending the exercise of this virtue. He was not content with prohibiting murder, but He condemned also every offensive act or word of anger, that might be directed against another person. Not merely was the shedding of blood forbidden by Him in general terms, but He entered into particulars; and commanded that our tongues should abstain from using even the least word of contempt towards our neighbour; and that our hearts should be kept free from all feelings of aversion and resentment.

He adds to His injunctions, a most forcible illustration of the working of His law of love: *If, therefore, thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar; and go first to be reconciled to thy brother: and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift.* We could not be more distinctly told that God will not accept either the prayers or the sacrifice of one who is not in charity with his brother. Even an angry thought is dangerous: if expressed in a word of great indignation—Raca—it is yet more dangerous: but if the passion of anger be so unbridled that expressions of malice and contempt escape the lips, our merciful Saviour declares that in such a case hell-fire is the deserved punishment. Help us, oh! help us, Lord Jesus, to keep a guard over the emotions of our hearts, and to control them by the law of charity; that no word of hatred, of disdain, of unkindness, ever be permitted to proceed out of our mouths.

II. POINT.

The reward promised to fraternal charity.

Forgive, and you shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given you. There is not throughout the entire Gospel a precept upon which our Lord insists more often or with more force, than on that of fraternal charity: the motives He adduces to excite in us a love for the practice of it, are worthy of His goodness in regard to us, His brethren. For the pardon of a slight offence committed against ourselves, He promises to forgive the offences we, on our part, may have committed against His Divine Majesty. For the gifts—the deeds of charity—we have not refused to our neighbour, He will, according to His word, recompense us with

His best blessings. And as if He feared that we should not have confidence enough in the accomplishment of His simple promise, He amplifies it thus : *Good measure shall be given you ; pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.* In God's gifts there is no scantiness—but liberality, and super-abundance. And after this manner shall we be rewarded in Heaven, if on earth we have practised charity. *If according to our ability we have been merciful, we shall have stored up to ourselves a good reward for the day of necessity.* How can we, through yielding to anger, run such a fearful risk as that of eternal punishment? or how is it possible that we should ever, by a want of charity towards our neighbour, forfeit the possession of the unfailing love of God? Give us hearts, O God, ready to forgive, even as we hope to be forgiven ; and may that, Thine own sweet spirit of charity, O Jesus, dwell in us, which prompted Thee to express the loving and oft-repeated desire for Thy disciples : *That they all may be one, as Thou Father, in Me, and I in Thee.*

COLLOQUY. .

O Jesus, Thou art all love ! Fill my soul with tender charity towards my neighbour. Especially let me possess it and manifest it with regard to those, whom Thou hast bound to me by the sacred ties of friendship and affection. May I honour all the children of the Heavenly Father, regarding them as being redeemed by Thy Precious Blood, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Keep me free from anger and contention ; and may my words and actions be kind, unselfish, charitable.

RESOLUTION.

To examine myself more diligently with regard to charity.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Eleventh Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

On the perfection to which we should tend.

Be you perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect.—
S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Jesus is about to give us a precept concerning the life of perfection ; let us renew our attention, and listen to it with reverence.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, grant that we may, in meditating upon these words, better comprehend the extent of that perfection to which Thou dost call us ; so that henceforth we may more faithfully correspond to Thy holy designs in our regard.

I. POINT.

Jesus said : *Be you perfect.*

This is not simply a counsel, given here by our Divine Master : it is a precept which He lays down for all Christians,

that they serve Him in the most perfect manner possible, according to the measure of grace they have received. How is it possible then that any, and particularly those who are in an especial manner consecrated to God in the Religious Life, can ever hold themselves at all exempt from this general command? It would be a dangerous error to suppose that the obligation of seeking to be perfect is imposed only upon the few, to whom God has given this attraction: none can excuse themselves in saying that they do not feel called to so sublime a life, as the following out of our Lord's injunction exacts: *Be you perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect*—that is to say, aspire to the holiness of God. Why then is perfection so rare amongst Christians? Can the moral requirements of religion have become less strict? No! they are invariable; but faith (that virtue which should animate the whole conduct of those who are called by that name), this it is which has grown feeble. True, living, active faith, which is nothing else but trust in God—firm and constant under every condition and circumstance of life—is rarely to be found, even amongst those who make profession of piety. Amongst the first Christians such faith was universal; and therefore we find that they never deemed it possible to accomplish our Lord's precept concerning perfection, unless they strove perpetually to become more like their Great Example. To do as they did, demands much courage: let us beg of our Heavenly Father to bestow it upon us, that we may become, by exercising our faith practically, what we all surely desire to be—Saints.

II. POINT.

We must be tending towards perfection all through our lives.

Perfect ! even as God is perfect ! Such is our calling. How great is the dignity to which we are to be raised ! our Father desires that we render ourselves worthy to belong to His family, by the acquiring of a resemblance to Himself. This is not the work of a day, but of a life-time. Our sanctity must be ever on the increase : we have to grow in the knowledge of Jesus—in His love—finding our gratification only in this. We have to grow in charity towards our neighbour ; and perform our every action in the most perfect manner possible. To inspire us with a truer idea of the perfection to which we are called, let us consider what the precept, on which we now meditate, has effected in the life of each one of the Saints. They took Jesus as their Model. Therefore they were wholly detached from the things of this world : they were ready, at any moment, to quit their family, their possessions, their country, to lose their reputation, and even life itself, if the interests of their Divine Master, and the salvation of their own soul demanded any such sacrifice. They were neither under subjection to corrupt nature, nor to any human motives ; but gave themselves up entirely to the leadings of grace. Their principles of actions were supernatural. *To be perfect like the Heavenly Father*—such was their aim, such should be ours—but if we compare our lives with the life of the least of the Saints, how much to our disadvantage will the comparison be. We are far off from the attainment of their degree of perfection. We know not to what height of glory God has destined each one, but we know that grace to reach it will be given. What an eternal wrong we are doing ourselves, if we are so living that we shall inevitably fall short of that destiny.

COLLOQUY.

Thanks be to Thee, O Jesus, for having to-day reminded

me of my high destiny. It is sadly true that I am far off from that perfection which Thou hast bidden me strive to attain ; help me to redouble my efforts—to repair my past negligence, and make amends for the time I have wasted ; and then to press forward to reach *the mark of my supernal vocation*. Never permit that I fail to gain that height of glory which Thou hast destined to be mine hereafter—if only I am faithful to use the measure of grace which will be sufficient to enable me to acquire true sanctity. I might for myself, have doubted the possibility of becoming perfect, but I cannot, for Thou hast said to me : *Be you perfect*.

RESOLUTION.

To do all my actions in as perfect a manner as I can.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Be you perfect : as also your Father is perfect.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Eleventh Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

On purity of intention in our good works.

Take heed, that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them ; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father, Who is in Heaven.—S. MATT. VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us picture to ourselves Jesus—the Truth—as He turns in His discourse to the subject of purity of intention, immediately after saying that we must seek to be perfect.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Lord, to realise the danger of vain-glory, so that avoiding it carefully, we may always act from the pure motive of pleasing Thee only.

I. POINT.

We ought to fear lest lower motives vitiate our intention in the performing of good works.

Our Divine Master is so desirous of procuring the glory of the Father, and of promoting our welfare, that after giving us the precept, *Be you perfect*, He at once points out the chief means to be taken in order to acquire perfection. We are to be on our guard against motives of vain-glory, or any others which self-love may suggest. Our good works are not to be done to be seen of men—to gain their applause. If they are, we gain indeed a temporary, but lose the eternal reward: with one hand we accept a trifling, valueless recompence, while with the other we throw away the golden prize of God's approval. If we sound our hearts we cannot fail to acknowledge that we are inclined to act far too much, in compliance with the promptings of self-pleasing. Is it not seldom, very seldom, alas! that we are contented with *only* God's approbation? not our own, not our companions'? that the desire of pleasing Him—of winning His favour—is our sole desire? Acting without reflection—without

weighing our motives—according to the common routine of self-seeking, we lose the merits of our good works time after time : and so accustomed are we to act from lower motives, that even when we propose to begin and finish something really for God, we find self gliding in and asserting its sway, and claiming at least some satisfaction. How watchful we have to be, if we would not be robbed, when half-way through our good actions, of part of their merit. Their mere exterior beauty is worth nothing : if the worm of vanity be eating away the core, the fruit will soon decay.

II. POINT.

It is purity of intention which has caused men and women to become Saints.

If we take the value of purity of intention into consideration, we shall find that it can render meritorious all that we do. The most simple, unimportant actions become great and dignified, if the intention accompanying them be good : and, on the contrary, the most praiseworthy, apparently saintly deeds are deprived of all real value, where the intention is faulty. Purity of intention may be justly called the philosopher's stone, since it actually converts into golden deeds the baser metal of ordinary actions. How precious in God's sight have the daily actions of the Saints become ; for by a good intention they have all been sanctified ! It has elevated these true servants of Christ, who have *done the will of God from the heart, with a good will serving, as to the Lord, and not to men*—elevated them above all human considerations, all created things : raised them into a higher region, wherein they see, love, and live for, God alone. Happy in serving so good a Master, they have no other

ambition in this life—seek no other glory, no other delight. To live after this manner (are we so doing?) is to act upon simple motives (are we so acting?). It is to live the life of Jesus, and consequently, to be Saints. Is it too difficult to lift our intention always up to God? It may be a strain upon our perseverance; but the habit of so doing is more quickly acquired than we might imagine. Let us resolve to make purity of intention henceforth a constant practice.

COLLOQUY.

O my God! would that there were not a thought of my mind, a desire of my heart, a word—a look—an action in my daily life, which did not express my love for Thee. Enlighten me to discover and to banish all those human motives which insinuate themselves into my mind; those natural affections which spring up in my heart so readily, and alloy the actions which they prompt me to perform. Purify my wishes from all self-seeking, and enable me to render my intention in all I do supernatural; so that every act may be an act of love for Thee, O God, and acceptable to Thee.

RESOLUTION.

To watch over myself, in the intention of always acting so as to please God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Do all to the glory of God.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Eleventh Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

The Lord's Prayer : preface.

Thus shall you pray : Our Father, Who art in Heaven.—
S. MATT. VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine that we hear from the Lips of the Son of Mary, the Lord's Prayer, for the first time.

II. PRELUDE.

O God, our Father ! inspire us with thoughts and sentiments worthy of our Divine adoption ; and may we always entertain towards Thee the love and respect which are Thy due.

I. POINT.

Jesus wills that we should call God our Father.

Let us here see the love of Jesus for us ! He, the only Son of the Father, but united to our nature in order to save us, adopts us as His brethren, and raises us to the dignity of being entitled the children of God. He desires that we should call God our Father, by so doing to augment our love, and further increase our confidence. For, as Saint Augustine says: "What is dearer to children than the word, Father ? It is a name full of love, and God wills that we pray to Him with hearts which breathe forth only sentiments of loving devotion." O infinite bounty of the Creator to-

wards the creature ! Which of us would have dared to address God by this Name, had He not Himself commanded us to do so ? It fills us with unbounded confidence if we use it thoughtfully ; for what will not a father give at the request of a beloved child ? It puts us in mind also of the nobility of our adoption, and that in having God for our Father, we become through Jesus Christ—*Who has been made like unto us*—inheritors of the Kingdom of His Father and ours. Jesus says—Father, and therefore, so do we. *Both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one : For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.* Let us thank Jesus for admitting us to share in His dignity ; and to honour it by the saintliness of our lives, the perfection of our love, and the extent of our confidence. Our Father : what more *can* we say ? O Father ! by Thy love for Thy Well-Beloved Son—Jesus, fill our hearts with His love for Thee.

II. POINT.

Our Father, Who art in heaven.

Heaven !—It is towards that blessed Country, which has become ours by the right of our Divine adoption, that Jesus would direct our thoughts, hopes, and desires, when we begin to pray. He would have us remember that this earth is a place of exile, where we are separated from God our Father ; and He wishes also that we should be better prepared to pray in a right spirit, by recalling to our minds, the infinite greatness of Him Who reigneth in glory. So we find Jesus on another occasion, when praying alone, thus addressing God in the beginning of His prayer : *O Father, Lord of Heaven !* This thought places us in the Presence of God, and lifts both heart and mind up to Him. Jesus

would open Heaven to us when we pray, and gain us admission into the celestial Court, amongst the Saints and Angels. What an honour! What a privilege! The Son of Mary raises us up together with Himself, to speak with the Lord of Heaven. Do we enter into, and appreciate the designs of Him Who is our Master in the science of prayer? are our hearts always full of love and filial respect when we say: *Our Father, Who art in Heaven?* Do we go on to speak to Him with child-like simplicity, and profound humility? Let us ponder over this manner of addressing God, which is at all times appropriate to our requirements, and suitable under every circumstance.

COLLOQUY.

Thou dost, O Jesus, invite me to call upon God by the self-same Title Thou didst Thyself use in prayer. Oh, that I could at all times enter into the full sense and energy of the words: *Our Father, Who art in Heaven!* My Father—the Father of all Christians—Thy Father, O Incarnate Word, Who art equal to Him, according to Thy Godhead. Like Thee, I may call Him—Father, Who is Lord of Heaven and earth. Make me to esteem this sublime dignity, and to prove my gratitude to Thee unceasingly, by my actions as well as by my words, for causing me to participate in it. Teach me how to pray in Thee and with Thee.

RESOLUTION.

To place myself in the Presence of God at the beginning of my prayer; and raise my heart and mind to Him as to my Father, Who dwells in Heaven.

point most searchingly; for we see clearly how much depends upon the verdict our conscience gives.

COLLOQUY.

I adore, O my God, Thine infinite mercy, in bearing with the numberless offences of sinners, with which each hour, each moment is laden. And my own defects are amongst them! How justly art Thou called the God of Mercy: be Thou ever blessed and praised for all the clemency and compassion Thou hast displayed in my regard. May the remembrance of this fill me with such a real sense of gratitude, that I may prove it by shewing mercy to others, especially to such as have injured me;—forgiving all, even as I hope to be forgiven by Thee.

RESOLUTION.

To shew a constant readiness to forgive.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Ninth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

Purity of Heart: sixth Beatitude.

Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.—
S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Happy to be further instructed in the school of Jesus Christ, let us still remain on the mountain and be taught by Him to know that : *Blessed are the clean of heart.*

II. PRELUDE.

Heart of Jesus, infinite Source of all purity, deign to make us comprehend how great a degree of purity is necessary, if we would please Thee here, and see Thee hereafter.

I. POINT.

The happiness of pure hearts.

A pure heart is one that, out of love for purity, rejects with extreme carefulness all that might tarnish the beauty of this virtue : a heart watchful over its every movement, so that it may suffer nothing to gain entrance therein which could in any way be displeasing to God : it hates all sin, and admits no other affection but that which it has for its Divine Possessor. Such hearts are truly happy : exempt from the servitude of the world, unshackled by mere human attachments, they are free to serve God, without impediment. And the All-holy God takes delight in such as have consecrated themselves to His love, and He communicates Himself to them. The promise that they shall see Him is fulfilled, in part, even in this life ; for God shews Himself, by imparting a clearer and more intimate knowledge to them of His Divine perfections. And, that eternal happiness is reserved for them, there is not a shadow of doubt ; is it not this assurance which has led so many to forsake the allurements of the world, and relinquish all claims to earthly

and imperfect affection ; thereby to ensure the pure delights of God's Friendship here, and the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision in Heaven. What vigilance can be too great, what fidelity too extreme, where the eternal consequences are so momentous ! Purity of heart gives us a right to see God, Face to face. Shall we forego it ?

II. POINT.

From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves, says the Apostle.

Weak in purpose and naturally feeble in the practice of virtue, it would be impossible for us, without the Divine assistance, to attain to that degree of cleanness of heart which our Lord God demands of us : but the infinite grace of perfect pureness which flows from the Heart of Jesus is, so to speak, at our disposal ; and thence we may draw the supply we need. In the Sacrifice of the Altar, from the Sacred Heart flows *the Wine which maketh Virgins*, inebriating them with spiritual delight, and purifying their affections. To gain or preserve the angelic virtue nothing is more effectual than the participation in the Communion of the Precious Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, either actually or spiritually ; by which means *the whole spirit, and soul, and body, is preserved blameless*, in such as avail themselves aright of this Divine privilege.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, Divine Spouse of all pure souls, I will not be so indifferent to Thy promise, that I shall see God if only I keep my heart free from all evil affections. Give me a yet more lively horror of all sin ; may I banish each idle thought,

each vain imagination as it presents itself; and seek to be free from every motion of pride and envy. Fortify me against the attacks of Satan, who desires to tarnish my soul, and deprive me of those virtues which Thou lovest best. Most pure Virgin-Mother of Jesus, pray for me; that I may never fall into any fault, which might endanger my hope of one day seeing God as He is.

RESOLUTION.

Often to ask God to keep my soul from all evil.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Ninth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

The Spirit of Peaceableness: seventh Beatitude.

Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.—S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us, with much recollection, remain on the mountain, listening to the words of our Divine Teacher: He now pronounces these: *Blessed are the peace-makers.*

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, God of peace! deign to give to us that spirit of peace with which Thou desirest Thy disciples should be filled, and thus become the children of the Heavenly Father.

I. POINT.

The advantages of the spirit of peace.

This pacific spirit is a boon so precious, that by Him, Who is the Eternal Wisdom, it was placed amongst the Beatitudes. Let us see in what it consists, and what are its fruits. Peaceableness is a tendency of the soul, which renders it calm and self-possessed; disposes it for increasing union with God, because all elements of disunion, impatience, and trouble, are repressed by its gentle influence. Seeing what our duties are, it causes us quietly to comply with their demands, however difficult they may appear; for the spirit of calmness holds its sway, and reigns undisturbedly within us. However unreasonable and exacting our neighbour may happen to be, there is no reason to be disquieted: it is wiser far to remain at peace with him. Have we no experience here to fall back upon, either as a warning or encouragement? All this supposes a true self-abnegation, a great love for God, and much charity towards others. And then, what inestimable advantages are procured to us, if we are the happy possessors of this spirit of peace. Already peace-makers may be reckoned amongst the number of the blessed. Nothing really troubles nor depresses them; trying circumstances cannot disturb their equanimity: not because they are stoical, but simply on account of the truth of the

prophet's words, which they realise : *The work of justice shall be peace, and the service of justice quietness, and security for ever. Thus saith the Lord : My people shall sit in the beauty of peace, and in the tabernacle of confidence, and in wealthy rest.* Do we recognise in ourselves the fruits of holy peace? Deeply considering its import let us often use the prayer : *May the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

II. POINT.

According to the example of Jesus Christ, we should be peace-makers.

At the Birth of our Lord, the Angels proclaimed that He came on earth in the character of Peace-Maker between God and man. It was for this one end that He embraced labour and suffering; that He laid aside His royal robe of glory, and clothed Himself with the garment of ignominy. His whole work on earth was to effect a reconciliation, and at what a cost to Him was it effected! Peace is endeared to us a thousand-fold by these considerations. In the midst of His immediate followers Jesus was the Peace-Maker; putting an end to their disputes, appeasing their minds when differences or vexations arose. How imperfect is our conduct with regard to the maintaining of peace! How often we may accuse ourselves of fomenting, instead of allaying strife; Our anger is all too easily aroused; our selfishness asserts itself so readily; our habit of complaining creates annoyance; a disagreement exists, and we half admit to ourselves that we have helped to promote it, but we are too proud to retract. And the consequence is, that discord grows—and we are responsible. *Can we be called the chil-*

dren of God, while this state of things continues? And further still, if we are truly peace-makers, we shall be perpetuating the mission of Jesus constantly, by making peace between enemies; by pointing out some way of ending contentions; in clearing up misunderstandings; and above all, by pleading with God, for the reconciliation of sinners with Himself, through the merits of the Cross of His Dear Son.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, Who art so justly styled the Prince of Peace, grant me, I beseech Thee, that peace which surpasseth all understanding, and which Thou didst come into the world to secure to men of goodwill. Keep me from ever again sowing seeds of discord, by any unguarded word; or by my conduct arousing any element of strife. Some there are who are angels of peace on earth; who carry on Thy work of reconciliation. Would that I might prove myself worthy to be called a child of God, because of my endeavours to be a peace-maker.

RESOLUTION.

To promote peace in myself, and amongst others, as far as I possibly can.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican.

Two men went up into the temple to pray : the one a pharisee, and the other a publican ; The pharisee standing prayed thus with himself : O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican ; I fast twice in a week ; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican standing afar off would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven ; but struck his breast, saying : O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say to you, this man went down into his house justified rather than the other ; because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled : and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—S. LUKE XVIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us go in spirit to the Temple at Jerusalem, and there see the pharisee congratulating himself on his good works—and the publican humbly asking mercy of God.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, perfect Pattern of humility, grant us grace to profit by the example Thou puttest before us in this parable of the publican who was justified before God.

I. POINT.

Pride is opposed to Christian perfection.

Our Divine Master made known the chief characteristics

of pride, in speaking of the conduct of the pharisee, that we may be inspired with real hatred for that which is the root of all sin. Full of self-esteem and of confidence in his own supposed merits, this proud man presents himself with assurance before God in His Temple: his whole bearing, his walk, his gestures, his looks, his words bespeak the good opinion he entertains of himself; and the disdain he has for others. Are our actions, our words never the counterpart of his? What a contrast between the name we bear as Disciples of the Meek and Humble Saviour, and our conduct, if we are in any way imitating this pharisee. To what danger is not our salvation exposed in such a case? Let us, while picturing this scene in the temple, examine our hearts to see if we therein cannot trace some sentiments which resemble his; if our outward demeanour does not partake sometimes of the presumptuous assurance of his; is there no self-sufficiency in our words, which may remind us of his vain boasting? If so, there is not a moment to be lost!—let us shake off all connexion with this proud pharisee; and go and seek to associate with the publican, and humble ourselves in God's sight.

II. POINT.

The virtue of humility pleases God; and gains hearts, notwithstanding its desire of being hidden.

This is what Jesus teaches us in this parable, concerning the publican: his humility was so pleasing to God, that although he entered the temple guilty of sin, he left it pardoned and justified. Nothing is more edifying than the practice of this virtue in one who is really humble, and modest in his opinion of himself. If we are deeply pene-

trated with a sense of our unworthiness, we offer to God that which He cannot refuse—the homage of a humble, contrite heart. Far from imagining that we see some good in ourselves that is not there, we ascribe to Him all the good that we may possess. The low estimation we have of ourselves will be unconsciously evinced by our words, our looks, our general demeanour; and the Presence of God in our hearts manifested thereby continually. What power over others humility has, to draw them to God, and to a love of virtue! It is always preaching a simple but effective sermon; often mute, yet always eloquent. How often does its presence cause some display of vanity or frivolity—some idle, ungracious words, to cease. And not only is it in itself a power: it is an ornament which should adorn especially the Spouses of Jesus; recognisable to all with whom they come in contact. It is a preservative against the contagion of evil; a charm to attract all hearts. Do we carry about with us this charm—this preservative? Can we do otherwise than pray by the side of the publican? Perhaps our pride may condemn us more before God than did his sins, and on that account we have greater need to put ourselves in the last place; to look down into the humbling recesses of our proud hearts, and say: *O God, be merciful to me a sinner.*

COLLOQUY.

O my Jesus, Whose humility has attracted so many hearts to Thyself, and exercised so wonderful a power over the lives of Thy Saints, strengthen my feeble desires to acquire this beautiful virtue more thoroughly. Let me never, never pride myself on my supposed merits, knowing that I have none of which to boast. I make my choice to-day to draw near to the poor sinner, who dared not believe himself worthy

even to lift up his eyes to Heaven ; and I confess with him my great need of Thy mercy, for I have sinned against Thee, O my God.

RESOLUTION.

To exercise myself in the actual practice of humility.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

O God, be merciful to me a sinner.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

The advantages of persecution : eighth Beatitude.

Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake : for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.—S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Jesus is about to pronounce the next and last Beatitude. Let us pay attention to His words : *Blessed are they that suffer for justice' sake.*

II. PRELUDE.

Fill us with Thy Spirit, O Jesus, so that if our devotion to Thyself draw down upon us the world's disapproval, or any kind of persecution, we may esteem ourselves happy to suffer for justice' sake.

I. POINT.

It is a great privilege to suffer in the cause of God.

To convince ourselves of this fact, we have but to consider the way in which our Lord enlarged upon this last Beatitude: *Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My Sake: Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in Heaven.* It is to His faithful ones Jesus thus addresses Himself; to those whose holy lives condemn the world's irreligion and profanity. If we are such, we must expect to meet with persecution from the enemies of our Lord: *The servant is not above His Master: If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you,* He said. We should therefore prepare ourselves for this, knowing that we shall not escape tribulation; and that we are expected, by Him Who has forewarned us of it, to suffer according to the Will of God. Saint Chrysostom affirms that to be permitted to endure unjust persecution is the highest of all favours; and that the crown to be won through it, will be the most brilliant of all the heavenly crowns. What honour can be greater than to be associated with the holy Apostles, and other Martyrs and Confessors, in suffering for love of their Master and ours? A bond of union is established between us and them by this means. When bound in prison, and when in the midst of cruel torments, they praised God for permitting that they should be persecuted wrongfully for His Name's sake. Do we shrink from such trials of our faith and love? If we are so cowardly, it is surely because we forget that the opportunity is presented to us of winning, not only the favour but the thanks of our Master. *If doing well, you suffer patiently, this is thankworthy before God.*

II. POINT.

In what the happiness of those who suffer for justice' sake further consists.

In saying that it will prove a happiness to suffer for Him, Jesus gives us the reason of this: that the Kingdom of Heaven will be the reward of these trials. And is not such a prize sufficient to excite our emulation? But there is yet another recompense to be enjoyed even in this life, that is, the resemblance which will be formed between ourselves and the Saint of saints, together with the privilege of testifying our devotedness to Him. Jesus multiplies indeed the proofs of His love for such as suffer in His cause, and increases in them the desire to labour and endure in the face of obstacles, in the midst of opposition. "Humiliation and persecution form a nourishment little relished by the many; but it pleased our Master—why do we not like it better?" asks an old writer. Let us seek to know, *why* we do not like it better. If we are true Christians, ought not *the world to be crucified to us, and we crucified to the world?* If it were entirely so, we should (as Saint Francis de Sales says) "bear our little persecutions with more patience; satisfied that they are most salutary in their effects—those of strengthening and confirming us in virtue—and that it is in many ways good for us to suffer contempt, and unjust reproaches. These serve to raise a barrier against vanity and pride, which otherwise might take possession of the garden of our soul, and cause the plants of piety to perish." But shall we be accounted worthy to suffer persecution as the Saints have suffered, if we cannot bear to be misunderstood in the slightest degree?—to be rebuked without

cause?—to be slighted or wronged by those from whom, perhaps, we may expect different treatment? Can we then be accounted worthy? No, not yet!

COLLOQUY.

I adore Thee, O Lord Jesus, as the Strength of the Martyrs, and the Source of courage in all those who suffer for love of Thy holy Name. Bestow on me also both strength and courage, that I may never shrink from confessing Thee, although by so doing I incur the enmity of Thy persecutors—the world and the devil. Make me ready and willing to endure humiliation, opposition, and persecution, even unto death, rather than forsake Thy cause. And let me offer Thee proofs of my desire to suffer for love of Thee, by bearing well the lesser trials and temptations of my every-day life.

RESOLUTION.

Gladly to endure unjust treatment for the love of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

*Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake :
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

Jesus predicts the unhappiness of the lovers of this world.

Woe to you that are rich : for you have your consolation. Woe to you that are filled : for you shall hunger. Woe to you that now laugh : for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when men shall bless you : for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets.—S. LUKE VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus, as He pronounced these words of threatening against those who seek their happiness in transitory things.

II. PRELUDE.

O God ! Thou hast shewn us the vanity of the world and its pleasures ; enable us by the help of Thy grace to fly its allurements more and more.

I. POINT.

That we must never cease to be on our guard against the spirit of the world.

Jesus, in uttering these menaces against the children of the world who, as it were, are content to play with its empty vanities, and wile away their time amidst its trifles, is desirous of impressing His Disciples with the importance

of coming entirely out from amongst them. He has just been tracing out the way of true happiness ; and then He warns His followers against the spirit of the world, which eventually destroys its votaries. He points out that through riches many are lost eternally, on account of their attachment to them,—that luxurious living is the cause of degeneracy,—that immoderate laughter and frivolity put the very remembrance of God away to a great distance,—lastly, that vain praises fill the heart with dangerous pride. Therefore to avoid all these perils, Jesus calls us away from that which might draw us near them ; and wills to inspire us with a preference for all that is contrary to worldliness. Well may we love holy poverty, for though it impose privations, at the same time it secures to those who practise it, imperishable riches ! Well may we esteem ourselves happy in leading a mortified life, for at the eternal Banquet we shall be abundantly satisfied ! Shall we not strive to shun dissipation, and to remain always in the Presence of God ? Is it not wise to despise earthly applause, and to prefer all that tends to keep us humble ; like Jesus and Mary, who could not be affected by the opinion of the world ? Thanks be to God, for having *called us out of its darkness, into the marvellous light* of a religious life.

II. POINT.

What we ought to do to increase in spirituality.

The more affection we have for any person, the more we adopt his sentiments. If, therefore, we truly love our Lord, and desire to be filled with His Spirit, we shall be increasingly engaged in making His sentiments our own. When Jesus gains the heart, love effects a real conversion ;

and it becomes so enamoured of sanctity of life, that by the force of holy aspirations the Divine Spirit is drawn to take up His abode therein. If it be so with us, worldly illusions will be dispelled ; the trifles of the earth will appear to us in all their nothingness ; and we shall esteem God only—His goodness and His grace. All the world's apparent magnificence will be little appreciated by those who, being truly spiritual in heart and mind, perceive the beauty of God's perfections, and are drawn to the contemplation of the splendour of the Eternal City, where all the Saints shall reign with Christ for ever. Are we so full of love for God, that the spirit of the world cannot enter our hearts ? are our thoughts free from it ? is our conversation ? our behaviour ? Are we really endeavouring to be as unworldly as our Saviour and His holy Mother were ? Can Jesus say of us : *They are not of the world ; as I also am not of the world ?*

COLLOQUY.

Remove far from me all worldliness, O my God ; for I do indeed desire to be entirely free from its baneful influence. May my love for Jesus cause me to adopt His views regarding the pleasures this earth affords, and the vanity of all transitory things. Draw away from them my affections, by the attraction of Thy grace ; and fix them on heavenly things. Oh ! that they may never be wasted on perishable objects, through any undue attachment for them. Let me care only to win Thy approbation, O God, and that Thou mayest number me amongst those who are in the world—but not of it.

RESOLUTION.

To banish the spirit of the world from my heart more entirely.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world.

PRAYER.

Our Father and Hail Mary.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

The salt of the earth—a simile.

You are the salt of the earth : But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted ? It is good for nothing any more ; but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men.—
ST. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Jesus often makes use of some simile to enforce His teaching. Let us listen to the one He here draws, for our instruction and profit, about the salt of the earth.

II. PRELUDE.

Make us to understand, O Lord, Thy manner of instructing us ; and impress on our minds the lesson Thou wouldst convey to us in saying : *You are the salt of the earth.*

I. POINT.

We ought to be the salt of the earth.

Salt possesses two essential properties, which as our

Divine Master would demonstrate, symbolise exactly the effects which the presence of His true servants ought to produce in the world. Salt, in the first place, savours all with which it enters unto combination ; and in the next, it preserves it from becoming corrupt.—So the good, who have the Spirit of Jesus, have a power over those with whom they come in contact ; and communicate to them an esteem for virtue, and a desire to participate in its excellence : besides, they preserve them by the moral and religious influence they possess, from the corruption of actual wickedness. They who are the *salt of the earth*, by their mere example, correct vices and defects ; and inspire others with a horror of sin and a love of holiness. They to whom our Lord addressed directly these words : *You are the salt of the earth*, were charged with a sublime mission : and if we would be worthy to receive these words, as addressed to us also, we must be ready to prove ourselves His true servants—to use the graces He bestows on us for the benefit of others—to make Him known and loved—to extend His kingdom in the world. How are we acquitting ourselves of our charge ? We have doubtless offered our services to Him unreservedly : how are we keeping our promise to be faithful to the grace of our vocation ?

II. POINT.

The uselessness of salt, if it lose its efficacy.

It is possible for those, whom our Lord would have to be *the salt of the earth*, to become useless in His service ; therefore He proceeds in His discourse to warn His Disciples against tepidity, indifference, the loss of the vigour of faith, or of the fervour of divine Love, by shewing that salt

may lose its virtue. If we fail in our usefulness, it is not only to ourselves that the injury is done, but also to others. In elucidating these words : *if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?* Saint Chrysostom says : “ One fervent apostle—one full of zeal—might convert a million sinners ; but should he lose his fervour, a million saints could not reanimate it”. How terrible will those consequences be that will fall on such as prove unfaithful to their calling, is implied distinctly in the words our Lord adds : *Such unseasoned salt is good for nothing any more, but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men.* Cast out of God’s favour—and then despised by men : for instead of converting sinners, they who were the salt of the earth will have been perverted by them. If we discover in ourselves any tendency to fall away from our first fervour, let us quickly look into the cause of this ;—if we find we have at all disedified others, especially any to whom we are bound to give a good example, let us at once make amends :—if we have scandalized our neighbour, let not our acts of reparation come too late. That we may be preserved from becoming as a cast-away—unfit for the Master’s service—it behoves us to live very close to Him : and concerning our intercourse with others, often to take counsel of Him.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, Who looking upon Thy Disciples didst say to them : *You are the salt of the earth*, I call to mind the fact that Judas was amongst them. He did not take heed to Thy warning ; Thy own chosen Apostle became worse than unprofitable. To Thee, O my Dear Saviour, do I turn for help to enable me to persevere in well-doing. Preserve me from the vice and corruption of the world ; keep me alive

to the dangers by which I am surrounded, and from relying on my own strength : may I not fail to edify others in our daily intercourse ; but serve Thee in serving them.

RESOLUTION.

To do my best to edify others by my words and actions.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

My disciples are the salt of the earth.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

Fidelity in little things.

He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater : and he that is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater.—S. LUKE XVI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us receive from the Lips of Him Who is Truth itself, His precept on fidelity in little things.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, Who dost shew such goodness to Thy Disciples in calling them to perfection, deign to make us understand that there is nothing little in Thy service—all in it is necessarily great and holy.

I. POINT.

There is no matter of indifference nor of insignificance in the service of God.

All that comes from God, all that leads to Him, is of sovereign importance, and most worthy of our respect. Therefore all the least points of our Rule of Life (being so many lesser but real graces,) are of infinite value to us, because they emanate from God; and the measure of His liberality ordinarily corresponds with the amount of faithfulness with which we use these lesser graces. They who despise them, deserve to be deprived of greater favours. Following out this argument, we become convinced that our sanctity and perfection depend on our fidelity in little things: perfection is the result of daily and faithful correspondence to all the movements of grace. How will it be possible to make great progress in holiness, if one has not the courage to take the easier steps? God gives us clearly to understand, that by the smallest action we may please Him as much as by the most important—that in the doing of the one or the other we may equally merit His approval. As by the commission of little faults we fall imperceptibly, but surely, into great ones, so by the exercise of little virtues, we arrive by degrees at the practice of the most

heroic. Who knows, for instance, but that just the simple observance of a rule of silence, or of religious modesty, may not be raising a soul to a high degree of spirituality? Or that the care taken to reject wandering thoughts in prayer, may not lead to the commencement of sublime contemplation? On our fidelity in disengaging the heart from affections which are too human, depends the deepening in it of divine love: is our love for God only superficial still?

II. POINT.

They who despise small faults, fall into graver ones.

Having seen the perfection to which constant fidelity to lesser graces can raise the soul, let us consider how habitual indifference about slight faults may—in fact, is certain to cause us, little by little, to fall into more serious ones. This downfall will not be sudden; vices, like virtues, grow gradually. One does not all at once descend into the mire of mortal sins; nor ascend to the summit of perfection at a bound. *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ*, says Saint Peter. A warning, giving the sad contrast, is embodied in these words: *Whoso contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little*. Thus, during our religious exercises, if we do not put away wandering thoughts as soon as we are conscious of them, we are leaving the door of our hearts ajar, and it will open wider presently to admit more dangerous ones. So if we neglect to hallow all we do with a good intention, we shall soon lose sight of higher motives, and our actions will be valueless—according to God's judgment of them. One little fault cannot overthrow us by its own weight; but a multitude of them may overpower us. They will help one

another to strengthen the passions, to weaken spiritual vigour, to raise up obstacles in the way of God's grace. In fine, voluntary faults—ever so small—in one who has been the special object of His love and favour, are an injury to the Heart of Jesus.

COLLOQUY.

My God ! how careless I am about my many imperfections. How little notice do I take of them in my daily examen of conscience. I have resolved again and again to be more circumspect, and yet I fear they multiply beyond all conception. I have indeed reason to humble myself for my want of fidelity in this matter ; and to be sorry on account of the little progress I have consequently made in the way of perfection. May I henceforth avail myself better of each grace Thou bestowest on me ; and do Thou help me, O Source of Light, to discover more clearly my lesser faults.

RESOLUTION.

To avoid and correct my imperfections, for the love of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

Punishment of scandal : Recompense of zeal.

He therefore that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven : But he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.—S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

To-day we hear our Lord continuing His Sermon on the Mount, and pronouncing a threat against such as give scandal ; but a promise of reward to such as are zealous in His cause.

II. PRELUDE.

Preserve us, O God, from the misfortune of giving scandal to others, but grant that, on the contrary, we may procure an increase of Thy glory, by our zeal for souls.

I. POINT.

What an affliction it is to the Heart of Jesus, if by our bad example we deter souls from serving Him aright.

After having consecrated ourselves to the service of God, it must needs be a grievous injury to Him, if we turn away from the observance of His holy law ; the injury is greatly aggravated however, if others are led to transgress it also, by our bad example. God may have specially chosen us to

use our influence, our talents, our time, in serving Him in His Church. If, therefore, we break His commandments, and leave others to suppose that the obligation to keep, perhaps the least seemingly important ones, is not so strict after all, are we not in some sense imitating the serpent in the garden of Eden, when he said to Eve: *Why hath God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree of paradise?* We, in effect, give rise, by our own failure in obedience and fidelity, to questionings: Why be so very careful on this or that point, when they who are held up as examples do not appear to be careful at all? and so our negligence forms the excuse for many and many a sin. In speaking, we forget the law of charity: the mischief does not end with ourselves, for our unkind words are repeated, and God's commandment is broken, through the bad teaching of one whose example should edify, and not lead astray. We can multiply instances for ourselves, relative to outward failures in duty; and see how far we come under the condemnation of our Lord, where He says: *Woe to him through whom scandals come.*

II. POINT.

A great reward is promised to such as aid in the saving of souls.

He that shall do and teach, shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. The Divine Master gave His Disciples, by means of this promise, an idea of the recompense which would crown their labours and their zeal for the salvation of souls. And may we not take this promise to ourselves? To aid in rescuing one, whom He has redeemed by His Precious Blood from hell—to assist a single soul to

reach heaven, is (according to the sentiments of the Loving Heart of Jesus) doing more than as if we had spared Him the torments of His Passion. Is it then a matter of astonishment that He grants such a magnificent recompense to His zealous co-operators in a work, so unspeakably dear to Himself? And there is a further motive of encouragement in the consideration that our labours are so blessed by God; that their consequences are recognised by Him—to our eternal advantage—ages after we personally have finished our work on earth. How much a faithful, zealous labourer may do to promote the Heavenly Master's glory, we know from the promise of eternal reward being given to those who convert even one from the error of his way. And they that are learned in the law of God and of true wisdom *shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity.* They who have taught God's law, either by word, or example, or in any other manner, will assuredly be great in the Kingdom of Heaven. O greatness worthy of pious envy! Have we not, each one of us, means at our command of acquiring this immortal glory? and can we be insensible to its attractiveness? or lose it, although within our reach? Rather will we do all in our power to the satisfying of the desires of the Sacred Heart, by helping souls to reach their heavenly inheritance.

COLLOQUY.

Yes, my Jesus, I will work with renewed ardour to make Thee known and loved. Thy example and Thy words of encouragement fill me with the desire of doing my utmost to save souls, who may glorify Thee through all eternity. Many motives unite to make me take the resolution of *doing and teaching* Thy holy law more unweariedly; but the

chief motive is gratitude to Thee for having given me this work to do. Keep me, by Thy grace, from ever scandalizing one of Thy children. Give me Thy blessing, as I go forth to labour for Thee.

RESOLUTION.

By doing, to teach the law of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He that shall do and teach, shall be great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

PRAYER.

Our Father and Hail Mary.

Tenth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

On understanding the things of God.

He that hath ears to hear let him hear : And the Disciples asked what the parable JESUS had spoken might be : To whom He said : To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.—S. LUKE VIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus, having just finished speaking a parable to the people : He proceeded to explain it to His Disciples when alone with them.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Lord, to gain from this meditation a great desire to receive from Thee a clearer understanding concerning the things of God.

I. POINT.

The understanding of His Word is a special gift of God.

The power of understanding matters which concern our salvation is one of the greatest gifts God can bestow. This understanding consists not in having a mere human and speculative knowledge of His holy Word—for this may be acquired by study, without the aid of grace: it is a clear interior enlightenment, which influences the heart at the same time that it illumines the mind; and gives strength to the will, to carry into effect the good which the intelligence approves. This light is not communicated to all men alike: a wicked mind is closed to it, for it is a personal grace of the Holy Spirit, and He cannot dwell in the midst of iniquity. But when a sinner begins to repent, God enlightens his eyes with the first gleam of this sacred light; by which he sees the fearful condition of his soul, the hideousness of his vices, hell open at his feet, and Heaven afar off. If he be faithful to this first grace, sentiments of confidence and love will succeed to the dread fear which has been awakened; his intelligence, yet more purified by the grace of the Sacraments, will begin to understand the goodness of God, and he will find happiness in following the way of His precepts. The wonders produced in pure souls by this divine light is yet more striking, if possible: they are led

on, from one degree of illuminating grace to another, until they obtain that knowledge of the secrets of God's power and love, which is bestowed even here, as a reward for past and present fidelity in obeying His inspirations. Oh! how most excellent are the effects of the light of grace! How unspeakable is our privilege, if Jesus has said to us as to His chosen Apostles: *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

II. POINT.

It is the true disciples of Jesus who possess the gift of Understanding.

After our Divine Master had finished speaking a parable to the multitude, He went aside, and the Apostles, finding themselves alone with Him, asked the meaning of it. Let us then suppose that we have been permitted to join their company, and therefore may take to ourselves these words of gracious assurance: *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.* If we are His true followers, Jesus reserves for us the privilege of a special explanation of His words—of a special illumination—bearing upon the points of His general instruction given to the world at large. We must take care how we hear the Word of God, and that we bring fruits from meditating upon it. The more attentive we are in making our meditation, the more faithful we are in keeping our good resolutions, the more will the Divine Master Himself make known to us His designs in our regard, and discover to us the treasures of His grace. So will our spiritual joy and happiness augment day by day; as, alone with Him, we shall be learning the mysterious lessons of His love. In His

infinite goodness He has chosen us; and asked of us that we will go aside from the world with Him, and in the solitude of holy recollection, listen to what He desires to communicate to us. *Apart He explained all things to His Disciples.* Are we as attentive as we ought to be, to the Voice of Jesus, speaking in the depths of our heart?

COLLOQUY.

With deepest gratitude, and feeling how unworthy I am of Thy goodness, I thank and praise Thee, O Bridegroom of my soul, for the lessons Thou dost impart to me as I meditate upon Thy Word. Enlighten me more and more, and shew me where I am not corresponding as I ought, with the spiritual favours Thou bestowest. *May I take heed how I hear Thy Voice,* and obey it with reverence, and promptitude, and exactness. Reveal to me more fully the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; and grant that ere long I may speak with Thee Face to face.

RESOLUTION.

To pray often for the illuminating grace of the Spirit of Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

Eleventh Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

Jesus cures a man who is deaf and dumb.

Going out of the coasts of Tyre, Jesus came by Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis ; And they bring to Him one deaf and dumb ; and they besought Him that He would lay His hand upon him ; And taking him from the multitude apart, He put His fingers into his ears, and spitting, He touched his tongue : And looking up to heaven, He groaned, and said to him : Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened ; And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right.—
S. MARK VII.

I. PRÉLUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus, as He looked with compassion on the deaf and dumb man.

II. PRÉLUDE.

Divine Jesus, with regard to spiritual things our souls are often affected with deafness and dumbness; deign to deliver us, by some of the many means of doing so which Thou hast at Thy command.

I. POINT.

The outward means used by Jesus to effect the cure of this afflicted man.

We see that Jesus was being accompanied by many of His disciples on His journey through the coasts of Decapolis, when some of them observing a man who could neither speak nor hear, led him forthwith to their Lord. They knew full well His readiness to cure any case they brought under His notice, they confided entirely in His power to do good. On this occasion He appears to wish to draw our attention to the fact that He works miracles through definite, simple, outward means,—visible signs of invisible grace. Jesus leads this poor man out of the crowd that had gathered round: to inspire him with greater awe and a deeper sense of the value of God's gifts which he demanded. He distinguishes this miracle by the performing of several mysterious acts. How does this use of ceremonial on the part of our Lord teach us to observe with reverence those outward acts, which form part of our religious duties; for each one symbolises with deep significance, some Catholic verity. Saint Gregory explains that when our Lord put His Fingers into the ears which before were void of the sense of hearing, He typified that Understanding is a gift which proceeds from Himself, and which He has a Divine right to withhold or to bestow. O Jesus! we beseech Thee, touch our souls, so that when Thou speakest, we may at all times, hear and understand Thy Voice. . . . Again, we must not only hear, but also be able to speak to God; and to others, for their edification. And if, of ourselves, we know not even what to pray for, still less do we know how to speak aright, unless our tongues and lips be anointed with the grace of wisdom.

Jesus put His Fingers into his ears, and spitting, He touched his tongue. Give to our tongues, O Lord, the unction of Thy grace, that we may ever be praising Thee.

II. POINT.

Jesus prayed as Man, and commanded as God.

We are told that the earnestness of the prayer of Jesus on behalf of this man, was observable in His actions : He groaned as He looked up to Heaven. He sighed—for He considered that he who was deaf and dumb represented all too painfully, the condition of the Jewish nation, of whom Isaiah had thus prophesied : *The heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears they have been dull of hearing. Who is deaf but they to whom I have sent my messengers ? . . . There is none that calleth upon My Name.* O Lord ! have we given Thee cause to grieve over our insensibility ? our slowness of speech in prayer ? our dulness of understanding when hearing Thy word ? If the faculties of our soul be closed, so as in any degree to prevent the operations of the Blessed Spirit therein, say to us, O Jesus, as Thou didst to the deaf and dumb man—Ephpheta ! O sigh of Jesus, in thee, what efficacy ! O word of Divine power, what miracles hast thou wrought ! Plead for us, O Son of Mary, to the Heavenly Father, now that Thou art at His Right Hand : command us, O Son of God, that our understanding may be opened to accept divine truths ; with our mouth will we proclaim *that Thou dost all things well. We will extol Thee, our King, and bless Thy Name for ever and ever : we will publish the memory of the abundance of Thy sweetness.*

COLLOQUY.

O my Saviour, my Advocate with the Father, I beseech Thee to heal the infirmities of my soul, and to plead with God that the gift of His pardoning grace may descend upon me. Let me not be deprived of the happiness of hearing Thy Voice ; nor hindered, by neglect in seeking Thy grace, from glorifying Thee in all I say. Without Thy succour I can neither hear nor speak aright. Keep me from putting any obstacle to the operation of the Holy Spirit's influence in my soul.

RESOLUTION.

To go to Jesus for grace, to hear His Voice, and speak in His honour.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He hath done all things well.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Eleventh Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

On the law of fraternal charity.

I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment : And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council : And

whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. . . . Forgive, and you shall be forgiven: Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom.—S. MATT. V. . . . S. LUKE VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us take our place again on the mountain near to our Lord, and listen to His precepts concerning charity towards our neighbour.

II, PRELUDE.

O Good Master, fill us with Thy Divine Spirit, so that practising charity in accordance with Thy desire, we may merit the reward Thou hast attached to it.

I. POINT.

The grievousness of faults contrary to charity.

Charity towards our neighbour is the principal point in every Christian code of laws; and we are bound by them, before all things, to practise this charity with continual care. In establishing the code of the rules of perfection, our Lord began by recommending the exercise of this virtue. He was not content with prohibiting murder, but He condemned also every offensive act or word of anger, that might be directed against another person. Not merely was the shedding of blood forbidden by Him in general terms, but He entered into particulars; and commanded that our tongues should abstain from using even the least word of contempt towards our neighbour; and that our hearts should be kept free from all feelings of aversion and resentment.

He adds to His injunctions, a most forcible illustration of the working of His law of love: *If, therefore, thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar; and go first to be reconciled to thy brother: and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift.* We could not be more distinctly told that God will not accept either the prayers or the sacrifice of one who is not in charity with his brother. Even an angry thought is dangerous: if expressed in a word of great indignation—Raca—it is yet more dangerous: but if the passion of anger be so unbridled that expressions of malice and contempt escape the lips, our merciful Saviour declares that in such a case hell-fire is the deserved punishment. Help us, oh! help us, Lord Jesus, to keep a guard over the emotions of our hearts, and to control them by the law of charity; that no word of hatred, of disdain, of unkindness, ever be permitted to proceed out of our mouths.

II. POINT.

The reward promised to fraternal charity.

Forgive, and you shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given you. There is not throughout the entire Gospel a precept upon which our Lord insists more often or with more force, than on that of fraternal charity: the motives He adduces to excite in us a love for the practice of it, are worthy of His goodness in regard to us, His brethren. For the pardon of a slight offence committed against ourselves, He promises to forgive the offences we, on our part, may have committed against His Divine Majesty. For the gifts—the deeds of charity—we have not refused to our neighbour, He will, according to His word, recompense us with

His best blessings. And as if He feared that we should not have confidence enough in the accomplishment of His simple promise, He amplifies it thus : *Good measure shall be given you ; pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.* In God's gifts there is no scantiness—but liberality, and super-abundance. And after this manner shall we be rewarded in Heaven, if on earth we have practised charity. *If according to our ability we have been merciful, we shall have stored up to ourselves a good reward for the day of necessity.* How can we, through yielding to anger, run such a fearful risk as that of eternal punishment? or how is it possible that we should ever, by a want of charity towards our neighbour, forfeit the possession of the unfailing love of God? Give us hearts, O God, ready to forgive, even as we hope to be forgiven ; and may that, Thine own sweet spirit of charity, O Jesus, dwell in us, which prompted Thee to express the loving and oft-repeated desire for Thy disciples : *That they all may be one, as Thou Father, in Me, and I in Thee.*

COLLOQUY. .

O Jesus, Thou art all love ! Fill my soul with tender charity towards my neighbour. Especially let me possess it and manifest it with regard to those, whom Thou hast bound to me by the sacred ties of friendship and affection. May I honour all the children of the Heavenly Father, regarding them as being redeemed by Thy Precious Blood, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Keep me free from anger and contention ; and may my words and actions be kind, unselfish, charitable.

RESOLUTION.

To examine myself more diligently with regard to charity.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Eleventh Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

On the perfection to which we should tend.

Be you perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect.—
S. MATT. V.

I. PRELUDE.

Jesus is about to give us a precept concerning the life of perfection ; let us renew our attention, and listen to it with reverence.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, grant that we may, in meditating upon these words, better comprehend the extent of that perfection to which Thou dost call us ; so that henceforth we may more faithfully correspond to Thy holy designs in our regard.

I. POINT.

Jesus said : *Be you perfect.*

This is not simply a counsel, given here by our Divine Master : it is a precept which He lays down for all Christians,

that they serve Him in the most perfect manner possible, according to the measure of grace they have received. How is it possible then that any, and particularly those who are in an especial manner consecrated to God in the Religious Life, can ever hold themselves at all exempt from this general command? It would be a dangerous error to suppose that the obligation of seeking to be perfect is imposed only upon the few, to whom God has given this attraction: none can excuse themselves in saying that they do not feel called to so sublime a life, as the following out of our Lord's injunction exacts: *Be you perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect*—that is to say, aspire to the holiness of God. Why then is perfection so rare amongst Christians? Can the moral requirements of religion have become less strict? No! they are invariable; but faith (that virtue which should animate the whole conduct of those who are called by that name), this it is which has grown feeble. True, living, active faith, which is nothing else but trust in God—firm and constant under every condition and circumstance of life—is rarely to be found, even amongst those who make profession of piety. Amongst the first Christians such faith was universal; and therefore we find that they never deemed it possible to accomplish our Lord's precept concerning perfection, unless they strove perpetually to become more like their Great Example. To do as they did, demands much courage: let us beg of our Heavenly Father to bestow it upon us, that we may become, by exercising our faith practically, what we all surely desire to be—Saints.

II. POINT.

We must be tending towards perfection all through our lives.

Perfect ! even as God is perfect ! Such is our calling. How great is the dignity to which we are to be raised ! our Father desires that we render ourselves worthy to belong to His family, by the acquiring of a resemblance to Himself. This is not the work of a day, but of a life-time. Our sanctity must be ever on the increase : we have to grow in the knowledge of Jesus—in His love—finding our gratification only in this. We have to grow in charity towards our neighbour ; and perform our every action in the most perfect manner possible. To inspire us with a truer idea of the perfection to which we are called, let us consider what the precept, on which we now meditate, has effected in the life of each one of the Saints. They took Jesus as their Model. Therefore they were wholly detached from the things of this world : they were ready, at any moment, to quit their family, their possessions, their country, to lose their reputation, and even life itself, if the interests of their Divine Master, and the salvation of their own soul demanded any such sacrifice. They were neither under subjection to corrupt nature, nor to any human motives ; but gave themselves up entirely to the leadings of grace. Their principles of actions were supernatural. *To be perfect like the Heavenly Father*—such was their aim, such should be ours—but if we compare our lives with the life of the least of the Saints, how much to our disadvantage will the comparison be. We are far off from the attainment of their degree of perfection. We know not to what height of glory God has destined each one, but we know that grace to reach it will be given. What an eternal wrong we are doing ourselves, if we are so living that we shall inevitably fall short of that destiny.

COLLOQUY.

Thanks be to Thee, O Jesus, for having to-day reminded

me of my high destiny. It is sadly true that I am far off from that perfection which Thou hast bidden me strive to attain ; help me to redouble my efforts—to repair my past negligence, and make amends for the time I have wasted ; and then to press forward to reach *the mark of my supernal vocation*. Never permit that I fail to gain that height of glory which Thou hast destined to be mine hereafter—if only I am faithful to use the measure of grace which will be sufficient to enable me to acquire true sanctity. I might for myself, have doubted the possibility of becoming perfect, but I cannot, for Thou hast said to me : *Be you perfect*.

RESOLUTION.

To do all my actions in as perfect a manner as I can.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Be you perfect : as also your Father is perfect.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Eleventh Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

On purity of intention in our good works.

Take heed, that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them ; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father, Who is in Heaven.—S. MATT. VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us picture to ourselves Jesus—the Truth—as He turns in His discourse to the subject of purity of intention, immediately after saying that we must seek to be perfect.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Lord, to realise the danger of vain-glory, so that avoiding it carefully, we may always act from the pure motive of pleasing Thee only.

I. POINT.

We ought to fear lest lower motives vitiate our intention in the performing of good works.

Our Divine Master is so desirous of procuring the glory of the Father, and of promoting our welfare, that after giving us the precept, *Be you perfect*, He at once points out the chief means to be taken in order to acquire perfection. We are to be on our guard against motives of vain-glory, or any others which self-love may suggest. Our good works are not to be done to be seen of men—to gain their applause. If they are, we gain indeed a temporary, but lose the eternal reward: with one hand we accept a trifling, valueless recompence, while with the other we throw away the golden prize of God's approval. If we sound our hearts we cannot fail to acknowledge that we are inclined to act far too much, in compliance with the promptings of self-pleasing. Is it not seldom, very seldom, alas! that we are contented with *only* God's approbation? not our own, not our companions'? that the desire of pleasing Him—of winning His favour—is our sole desire? Acting without reflection—without

weighing our motives—according to the common routine of self-seeking, we lose the merits of our good works time after time : and so accustomed are we to act from lower motives, that even when we propose to begin and finish something really for God, we find self gliding in and asserting its sway, and claiming at least some satisfaction. How watchful we have to be, if we would not be robbed, when half-way through our good actions, of part of their merit. Their mere exterior beauty is worth nothing : if the worm of vanity be eating away the core, the fruit will soon decay.

II. POINT.

It is purity of intention which has caused men and women to become Saints.

If we take the value of purity of intention into consideration, we shall find that it can render meritorious all that we do. The most simple, unimportant actions become great and dignified, if the intention accompanying them be good : and, on the contrary, the most praiseworthy, apparently saintly deeds are deprived of all real value, where the intention is faulty. Purity of intention may be justly called the philosopher's stone, since it actually converts into golden deeds the baser metal of ordinary actions. How precious in God's sight have the daily actions of the Saints become ; for by a good intention they have all been sanctified ! It has elevated these true servants of Christ, who have *done the will of God from the heart, with a good will serving, as to the Lord, and not to men*—elevated them above all human considerations, all created things : raised them into a higher region, wherein they see, love, and live for, God alone. Happy in serving so good a Master, they have no other

ambition in this life—seek no other glory, no other delight. To live after this manner (are we so doing?) is to act upon simple motives (are we so acting?). It is to live the life of Jesus, and consequently, to be Saints. Is it too difficult to lift our intention always up to God? It may be a strain upon our perseverance; but the habit of so doing is more quickly acquired than we might imagine. Let us resolve to make purity of intention henceforth a constant practice.

COLLOQUY.

O my God! would that there were not a thought of my mind, a desire of my heart, a word—a look—an action in my daily life, which did not express my love for Thee. Enlighten me to discover and to banish all those human motives which insinuate themselves into my mind; those natural affections which spring up in my heart so readily, and alloy the actions which they prompt me to perform. Purify my wishes from all self-seeking, and enable me to render my intention in all I do supernatural; so that every act may be an act of love for Thee, O God, and acceptable to Thee.

RESOLUTION.

To watch over myself, in the intention of always acting so as to please God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Do all to the glory of God.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Eleventh Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

The Lord's Prayer : preface.

Thus shall you pray : Our Father, Who art in Heaven.—
S. MATT. VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine that we hear from the Lips of the Son of Mary, the Lord's Prayer, for the first time.

II. PRELUDE.

O God, our Father ! inspire us with thoughts and sentiments worthy of our Divine adoption ; and may we always entertain towards Thee the love and respect which are Thy due.

I. POINT.

Jesus wills that we should call God our Father.

Let us here see the love of Jesus for us ! He, the only Son of the Father, but united to our nature in order to save us, adopts us as His brethren, and raises us to the dignity of being entitled the children of God. He desires that we should call God our Father, by so doing to augment our love, and further increase our confidence. For, as Saint Augustine says: "What is dearer to children than the word, Father ? It is a name full of love, and God wills that we pray to Him with hearts which breathe forth only sentiments of loving devotion." O infinite bounty of the Creator to-

wards the creature ! Which of us would have dared to address God by this Name, had He not Himself commanded us to do so ? . . . It fills us with unbounded confidence if we use it thoughtfully ; for what will not a father give at the request of a beloved child ? It puts us in mind also of the nobility of our adoption, and that in having God for our Father, we become through Jesus Christ—*Who has been made like unto us*—inheritors of the Kingdom of His Father and ours. Jesus says—Father, and therefore, so do we. *Both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one : For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.* Let us thank Jesus for admitting us to share in His dignity ; and to honour it by the saintliness of our lives, the perfection of our love, and the extent of our confidence. Our Father : what more *can* we say ? O Father ! by Thy love for Thy Well-Beloved Son—Jesus, fill our hearts with His love for Thee.

II. POINT.

Our Father, Who art in heaven.

Heaven !—It is towards that blessed Country, which has become ours by the right of our Divine adoption, that Jesus would direct our thoughts, hopes, and desires, when we begin to pray. He would have us remember that this earth is a place of exile, where we are separated from God our Father ; and He wishes also that we should be better prepared to pray in a right spirit, by recalling to our minds, the infinite greatness of Him Who reigneth in glory. So we find Jesus on another occasion, when praying alone, thus addressing God in the beginning of His prayer : *O Father, Lord of Heaven !* This thought places us in the Presence of God, and lifts both heart and mind up to Him. Jesus

would open Heaven to us when we pray, and gain us admission into the celestial Court, amongst the Saints and Angels. What an honour! What a privilege! The Son of Mary raises us up together with Himself, to speak with the Lord of Heaven. Do we enter into, and appreciate the designs of Him Who is our Master in the science of prayer? are our hearts always full of love and filial respect when we say: *Our Father, Who art in Heaven?* Do we go on to speak to Him with child-like simplicity, and profound humility? Let us ponder over this manner of addressing God, which is at all times appropriate to our requirements, and suitable under every circumstance.

COLLOQUY.

Thou dost, O Jesus, invite me to call upon God by the self-same Title Thou didst Thyself use in prayer. Oh, that I could at all times enter into the full sense and energy of the words: *Our Father, Who art in Heaven!* My Father—the Father of all Christians—Thy Father, O Incarnate Word, Who art equal to Him, according to Thy Godhead. Like Thee, I may call Him—Father, Who is Lord of Heaven and earth. Make me to esteem this sublime dignity, and to prove my gratitude to Thee unceasingly, by my actions as well as by my words, for causing me to participate in it. Teach me how to pray in Thee and with Thee.

RESOLUTION.

To place myself in the Presence of God at the beginning of my prayer; and raise my heart and mind to Him as to my Father, Who dwells in Heaven.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Our Father, Who art in Heaven.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Eleventh Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

The Lord's Prayer: first request.

Hallowed be Thy Name.—S. MATT. VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us think of the multitude of Saints now in Paradise, who have sanctified themselves by making it their constant aim to glorify the holy Name of God.

II. PRELUDE.

Enkindle in us, O God, zeal for Thy glory, so that in all we do, we may seek to hallow Thy holy Name.

I. POINT.

In what way we may hallow God's Name.

In knowing, loving, and adoring God, we sanctify His holy Name. This is the end for which all men are created.

To love Him perfectly we have been taught to know Him ; and knowledge and love find expression in acts of adoration. It is they who have studied the best in the school of Divine charity, who know best how to glorify Him Who is perfect love. *Hallowed be Thy Name*, is the first request in the prayer taught us by Jesus. Its preface takes us up in heart and mind beyond the region where self holds sway ; and these words of petition retain us there. We seem to ask God to give us work to do for His glory only—opportunities of making known His great Name, as far as we can : but since we are conscious of the little we can do individually, we would impetrate the assistance of all creatures animate and inanimate ; the words of the Psalmist re-echoing in our hearts : *Praise the name of the Lord ! ye His Angels, and all His Hosts—ye Heaven of heavens : From the earth, ye dragons, and all ye deeps : Fire, hail, snow, ice, stormy winds : Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars : Beasts and all cattle : Serpents and feathered fowls : Kings of the earth and all people, princes and all judges of the earth : Young men and maidens : the old with the younger, praise the Name of the Lord.* Whilst we then express our desires that this most holy Name be thus sanctified, let us see if our own lives are truly in accordance with our oft-repeated prayer : *Hallowed be Thy Name.* Are we fulfilling the end of our creation ? shewing that *He Who is* is the one Object of our love, service, and veneration ?

II. POINT.

We must labour as well as pray, in the intention that God's Name may be sanctified.

How few there are, comparatively speaking, who honour

the Name of God. Not to dwell at length upon the dishonour with which it is treated by those who actually profane It, is it not painfully evident that it is often used with lightness and irreverence? How many times in one single day do we find ourselves speaking the Name of God, while our thoughts are centred not on Him, but on some rival to our affections; perhaps on some object altogether unworthy of our attention? Our minds are engrossed in some selfish project, or we are indulging in thoughts of vain-glory. If we were speaking—offering a petition—to some earthly sovereign, we should esteem it an honour to address him by name; how is it that that Name *which is terrible and holy* is often spoken with less respect? And it is in our daily work, whatever it may be, that we should also do honour to the Name of our God! For the sake of It, we ought to be devoted and faithful in the discharge of every duty. Can we say, as our Divine Saviour did, just at the close of His earthly career: *Father! I have glorified Thy Name*—I have manifested It to those with whom I have lived? Have we laboured to make Its power and greatness better understood? Its influence acknowledged? Have we sanctified it in the hearts of others by our example of tender piety, our evident faith? If we so act as if *we had forgotten the Name of our God, shall not He search this out?*

COLLOQUY.

I thank Thee, O God, that Thou hast taught me the beauty and sanctity of Thy Name. In it is centred all that is sovereignly good, and great, and holy! And Jesus has associated me as His disciple, in His mission of glorifying and manifesting It before the world.—Oh! that I were more devoted to Its interests, and hallowed It in my prayers, my

intercourse with others, more consistently with my relation to Thee, O God, my Father. May I henceforth acquit myself of my duties of piety and of charity with this end in view : to sanctify Thy holy Name.

RESOLUTION.

Often to contemplate the sanctity of the Name of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Hallowed be Thy Name, O God !

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Eleventh Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

The Lord's Prayer : second request.

Thy Kingdom come.—S. MATT. VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine that we hear Jesus Himself thus praying for the advancement of the Kingdom of the Lord of Heaven and earth.

II. PRELUDE.

Fill us, O Jesus, with true zeal to promote the coming of the Kingdom of God, by bringing ourselves into subjection to His rule in our hearts, more entirely.

I. POINT.

In what the spiritual Kingdom of God consists.

Thy Kingdom come! By these words Jesus wishes that we should ask for the reign of His grace and of His love. The reign of His grace—that is to say, that God would as a sovereign take possession of our souls—His own dominion—and subjugating them completely, cause to reign within them justice, and peace, and joy, which according to Saint Paul, constitute in this world the Kingdom of God. And is not this worthy of our highest ambition—that God may be our Ruler? As such He secures to us immense advantages. We have, it is true, to combat constantly for the honour of our Sovereign, fight His battles, and subdue foes from within and from without. Peace is maintained in the midst of continual warfare against the devil; and the condition of perpetual strife with our passions, is one of tranquillity and repose. For by these means it is that the reign of Divine love is established in our hearts here, while we are preparing to share eventually in the reign of Divine glory hereafter. *Thanks be to our King, Who giveth us the victory!* Govern us absolutely, O Lord God! help us to quell every rebellious thought, to exterminate every treacherous intent of our hearts. Do Thou captivate our affections—occupy our thoughts—attract to Thyself our desires, and enthrone in us Thy love; so that none other may have dominion over us but Thyself, Most Mighty King.

II. POINT.

We should desire to see the Kingdom of God in Heaven.

We should look beyond the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, to the blessed time when we shall witness

all the plenitude of its glory in Heaven. All that we do now to extend His reign, all that is accomplished by His servants, will be transferred like precious spoils won from the enemy's hand, to add to the glory of the Great Conqueror in the world to come. When we pray : *Thy Kingdom come*, let us picture to our minds that hour of triumph when His Saints shall lay their trophies at His Feet—spiritual kingdoms won for their God—empires rescued from the grasp of hell—to be henceforth and for ever added to the conquests of their King. Soon the number of the elect will be complete ; all that opposes or exalts itself against God will be put down ; His power will soon be acknowledged by all His enemies, *the enemy death shall be destroyed last*. For this day we long and pray ; to hasten its appearing we would fain toil and suffer ; while from beneath the Altar in Heaven the souls of the Martyrs cry out : *How long, O Lord !* Are not all faithful members of the Church militant desiring most earnestly *the coming of the glory of the Great God*, encouraging their hearts with the words of the Apostle : *We look for new heavens and a new earth, according to His promise ?* O God, we beseech Thee, hasten the coming of Thy Kingdom. *Take to Thyself Thy great power and reign.*

COLLOQUY.

O Lord God Almighty ! how consoling is the thought that ere long Thou wilt reign undisputedly over all things. All shall own Thy power, from the least to the greatest. During my waiting time on earth, while I look and long for the second Coming of the Desire of all nations, do Thou, I beseech Thee, reign in my heart, subdue me wholly to Thyself—never permit any one of Thine enemies to have dominion over me. May I, under Thy governance, advance

Thy Kingdom in the hearts of others—to the utmost of my power—and thus hasten the coming of Thy Kingdom.

RESOLUTION.

To do what I can to-day to advance the Kingdom of the Heavenly Father.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

O God! Thy Kingdom come.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Twelfth Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

Jesus felicitates the Apostles on their happiness.

Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see: For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see and have not seen them: and to hear the things that you hear and have not heard them.—
S. LUKE X.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us place ourselves amongst the disciples who surrounded our Lord, and thank Him for permitting us also to see and hear His deeds and words.

II. PRELUDE.

Oh, give us, Lord, grace to appreciate as we ought, the happiness of knowing Thee—of studying Thy Life on earth, that we may copy it.

I. POINT.

The happiness of seeing and hearing Jesus.

The Apostles were happy in that they saw Jesus, their Beloved Master ; conversed with Him, observed the beauty of His characteristics and Divine perfections. They lived with the God-made-Man—the Desired of all nations. But is our happiness less than theirs ? Have we any cause to envy them ? We do not, it is true, see the Person of Jesus Christ, our ears do not hear the sound of His Voice,—but He dwells by day and by night in the Holy Tabernacle, always ready—waiting to receive us, to listen to us, to answer our petitions. From His Presence, multiplied as It is throughout the entire world, none are precluded who wish to enjoy His company—to live in familiar intercourse with Him. To adore Him, to love Him, to speak with Him of the interests of His glory, and the salvation of souls—all this forms the truest enjoyment of the faithful followers and friends of Jesus. If we are such, it is to us He addresses the words : *Blessed are your eyes*, because by faith they see Me, here present : *Blessed are your ears*, for they hear : and thus you learn to know the secrets of My love. Yes ! O Lord, most happy do we account ourselves to possess Thee in very deed amongst us ; and to enjoy the inestimable advantages of knowing Thee, as we may truly say, personally.

II. POINT.

A life of solid piety cannot fail to be a life of happiness.

We must recollect that the Apostles had left all to follow Jesus. They had forsaken everything that this world could offer them—for the sake of His companionship. What have we left, in order to secure to ourselves the privilege of being with the Divine Master? As with the Apostles, so with us, —we must of our own free-will make a choice between the possession of Jesus, and the possession of that which it costs us something to renounce. With Saint Peter, we may relinquish home ties—with Saint Matthew, the prospect of amassing wealth—with Saint Andrew, the society of even pious friends—with Saint James and Saint John, all earthly possessions. Worldly allurements, gratifications, pleasures : self-interest, with its ambition for honour, esteem, human affection : truly there is a wide field for self-combat ! If we see Jesus, and hear Him, we shall not fail to understand what our sacrifices are to be, if we would follow Him faithfully ; what we are to forsake, if we would find our all in Him. He does not say that it is only after death, that we shall find the blessedness of having preferred to cast in our lot with Him. Now all really religious persons enjoy ineffable happiness—the witness of a good conscience—interior peace—pure joy—freedom from all undue solicitude. None can dispute their right to, none can deprive them of, these treasures. If they remain fervent in the service of their Master, and perseveringly follow Him, they will see what He would have them to do, and hear His Voice as it guides them on : *This is the way—walk ye in it.* Perhaps we are robbing ourselves of the happiness necessarily consequent upon a close observing and imitating of the

Life of Jesus. Are the benedictions which accompany solid piety lost to us, because we choose not to offer the sacrifice which would bring them down upon our lives, according to the word of our Lord ?

COLLOQUY.

Thou dost call me to an intimate knowledge of Thyself, O Jesus ! Thou dost ask me to accompany Thee—to keep near Thee, as the Apostles did, that I may have daily opportunities of seeing and hearing how I should follow Thy example. How signal a favour is this ! may I never deprive myself by any unfaithfulness to Thee, of the manifold blessings Thou hast pronounced over such as remain in Thy Presence continually. Let me make any sacrifice Thou demandest of me—proceed on my way, with or without what has once been dear to me, as Thou shalt appoint. *The lines are fallen unto me in goodly places : I have set the Lord always in my sight : for He is at my right hand that I be not moved.*

RESOLUTION.

To see and hear Jesus, throughout the day, more frequently.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed are your eyes, because they see : and your ears, because they hear.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Twelfth Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

The Lord's Prayer: third request.

Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven.—S. MATT. VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine to ourselves that we hear Jesus saying the words, which form the third of those requests in the Lord's Prayer that directly relate to Himself.

II. PRELUDE.

Deign to teach us, O Jesus, how to love and accomplish the holy Will of God, so that it may be all our joy, and the rule of our actions.

I. POINT.

We should confidently submit to the Will of God.

Faith teaches us that nothing happens in the world which is not ordered, or permitted by God: that His Divine Will presides over every event; and that for the fulfilment of His designs He makes even the wickedness of men to be instrumental. All then that occurs with regard to His own children contributes to their sanctification: this holy Will encircles them like a wall of defence which no dart from the enemy, no temptation, no affliction can pass through. Nothing can happen to them without the express permission of God. This thought—this fact is a powerful

motive of confidence in the midst of seemingly the most adverse circumstances: God loves us, He knows perfectly what is most advantageous for us; and we may be assured that even out of that which may appear harmful or dangerous, He can procure for us real profit; if only we are staunch in our allegiance to Him. Is it not most just that we should bow down submissively before the Heavenly Father's Will, since Jesus did so?—setting us a perfect example of conformity in all things to it. *I seek not My own Will*, was the maxim impressed on every action of His Life. If God puts our fidelity to the test, it is to prove the reality of our prayer: *Thy Will be done on earth* by all Thy children, as it is in Heaven by the holy Angels. Do we indeed mean what we say?

II. POINT.

We should submit lovingly to the Will of God.

Confidence is due to God, our Father; and this alone should constrain us to abandon ourselves unreservedly to His Providence under every circumstance of life; not one of which can be beyond the limits of His control. And yet further, if we have real confidence in Him, we shall second His designs by a prompt and perfect obedience. We shall desire above all things that in us, and by us they may be accomplished: in us—through great fidelity in corresponding to the interior light and grace God gives us, to enable us to attain perfection: by us—through the exterior accomplishment of His precepts, His counsels, and the duties of our calling. All this presupposes genuine love for God: but it is an illusion, and a dangerous one too, to allow ourselves to be persuaded that we love Him truly, if we are not ready to

prove it by our obedience to His commands. It may appear difficult to be obliged to renew the sacrifice of natural inclination, self-love, human reasoning, so often : but at such moments one look at Jesus Christ will reanimate our courage and virtue. He rendered not merely an obedience to the Will of His Father, directly made known ; but also when indirectly expressed, through the medium of His parents or of His enemies. *He was obedient, even unto death*—humbly, meekly, lovingly. The virtue of self-abnegation—so much recommended by Him—is often difficult to practise when it consists in renouncing one's own will and judgment, to follow the will and judgment of those who hold the place of God in our regard : if, on such occasions we find it so, let us renew with joy and alacrity our act of submission : *Father, Thy Will be done.*

COLLOQUY.

O my God, I belong to Thee entirely ! Do Thou guide and govern me. I desire to have no will of my own, but that it be wholly lost in Thine. Where Thou wilt I should be, surely that must be the best place for me. The occupation Thou choosest for Thy servant, must needs be fraught with eternal advantages. What can I desire in any way beyond that which Thy good pleasure ordains ? Make me so to love Thy Holy Will, that the fulfilling of it may be my spiritual nourishment, as it was that of Thy Dear Son. Let me, like Him, accomplish the work Thou givest me to do.

RESOLUTION.

To be more intent on doing the holy Will of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Twelfth Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

The Lord's Prayer: fourth request.

Give us this day our daily bread—our supersubstantial bread.—S. MATT. VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us first adore the infinite goodness of Jesus, Who teaches us to ask of God all that is necessary both for body and soul.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace to understand how blessed we are in having Thee, O God, for our Father; to Whose paternal goodness we may have recourse in all our temporal and spiritual wants.

I. POINT.

We should ask God for all we need.

As there are in us two lives—the one of the body, the other of the soul—our Saviour by these words: *Give us this day our daily bread*, shews us that we should pray to our Heavenly Father to give us all that is necessary for the preservation of the one and the other. Our souls stand in need of spiritual food, so that they may increase in holiness; and have strength to proceed in the way of virtue. This nourishment is the Word of God, dispensed to us in pious exhortations, the reading of good books, meditation and prayer. The Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is, in particular, that Celestial Bread which we ask of God for the support and sanctification of our souls, for the assuring of the resurrection of our bodies, and the eternal life of both. Let us examine what our relish—what our desire is, for these different forms of daily—of supersubstantial bread? If we have a taste and longing for it, we may take this for a good sign. But if we, on the contrary, care little whether we receive spiritual food or no, it is because we are seeking to satisfy our hunger with that which is not bread, but husks of worldliness and vanity. O Jesus! give us to hunger after *the Living Bread which came down from Heaven*—even Thyself.

II. POINT.

We are to pray not only for the soul, but also for the body.

The Heavenly Father forbids His children to be disquieted about the future; but He desires that they daily ask Him for the temporal things of which they have need for the preservation of life. By the Mouth of His Divine Son, He teaches us humbly to make known our wants: *Give us this day our daily bread*: not riches—not those things which render life pleasant—still less luxuries and superfluities, but

that which is absolutely necessary for our subsistence, to meet our daily necessities, without any superabundance. Again we are only taught to ask for to-day: of to-morrow we are not sure—why then be troubled about it? It is on account of the weakness of our faith, that over-anxiety arises about what may be in the future: we forget too quickly that benefits already received are a pledge of others in store for us. How good God has been to us!—shall we not trust Him again? He says by His prophet: *Can a woman forget her infant? and if she should forget, yet will I not forget Thee.* Let us then praise Him for His goodness, have recourse to it with confidence; understanding at the same time that it is doing Him an injury to distrust His love and His paternal care. If sometimes He seem to refuse us some temporal favour that we ask, it is always an effect of His wisdom—to spare us an occasion of falling—to afford us opportunities of meriting a higher degree of glory—to teach us what to do in order to second the designs of His Providence. Penetrate our minds, O God, with the consoling truth, that Thou knowest our actual needs better than we know them ourselves; and can and will supply them. The Manna in the desert never failed His chosen people.

COLLOQUY.

O Lord! all expect of Thee that Thou give them food in season: When Thou givest to them they shall gather up: When Thou openest Thy Hand they shall all be filled with good. Yes! from Thee I expect to receive all things needful. I ask for nothing superfluous: give me only the necessities of life—spiritual and temporal—so that I may be strengthened to serve Thee in body and soul. Most ardently do I desire, O Lord, to be fed continually at Thy Holy Table;

to partake of the Celestial Manna which shall preserve me to life everlasting.

RESOLUTION.

To ask for things spiritual with fervour and perseverance :
for things temporal, with truthfulness and resignation.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Give us this day our daily bread.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Twelfth Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

The Lord's Prayer : fifth request.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.—S. MATT. VI.

I. PRELUDE.

We are listening to Jesus as He teaches us the perfection of Charity.

II. PRELUDE.

O Good Master ! put into our hearts sentiments of true charity regarding those who offend us : pardoning them gladly, may we please Thee, and be ourselves forgiven.

I. POINT.

All of us have need to implore the mercy of God.

There is no one on earth so holy as not to be a debtor to the mercy of God. If the Saints have not fallen into great sins, they have nevertheless often committed some faults ; and have therefore felt so extreme a grief and profound a sincerity when praying for the pardon of their trespasses ; confessing them to have been numberless. What then can we think of ourselves, who are so weak—so prone to evil ? Let us compare with the sentiments of our hearts these words of Jesus Christ : *Love your enemies : do good to them that hate you : pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.* Why have we an aversion for this or that person ? Are not all Christians children of God ?—members of Jesus Christ, even as we are ? Have not all the Baptised been redeemed by the same Precious Blood ? called to an inheritance of glory ? If we hate some particular persons because of their not being exempt from failings, whom shall we love ?—for all have sinned. Let us think of ourselves. Were we just when Jesus Christ first loved us ? In what condition should we be, if He had not loved sinners ? Is the wrong done to us to be compared with the injury we have done to God ? We are despised perhaps : most probably not without cause. We are defrauded of our rights : has not God the higher right to all we possess ? and can He not make any creature He pleases His instrument, if He sees fit to deprive us of anything ? Do not let us call any one an enemy, who is helping us to gain Heaven. We should not stop at second causes ; but lift our thoughts up to the First Great Cause, and recognise hidden treasures amongst the trials of this life which He sends us.

II. POINT

God will forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others.

The Christian law is a law of love. Jesus enjoins us to keep the precept touching the pardon of injuries, and would induce us to fulfil it exactly by the very form of the petition: *Forgive our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* He gives us permission to claim from the Heavenly Father the same indulgence we have shewn towards our brethren, for love of Him. How advantageous then is it heartily to forgive!—to have opportunities of doing so!—since we ourselves are so often in need of God's pardoning mercy. By acts of mercy and forgiveness, we resemble Him,—we imitate Him in the use of powers which are divine: the power of forgiving others—the power of self-government. When we have received some slight, or even a distinct injury, how do we act? If another permit words to escape which wound our feelings, do we command ourselves, and reply with gentleness? This it is that Jesus demands of us—this is something of the perfection of charity which He asks. Oh! how unworthy of His love should we be, if instead of forgiving one another for those failings to which even the most virtuous are liable—if instead of returning good for evil, there is a desire of retaliation, thoughts of revenge—would not this be to render ourselves unworthy of the blessing of God? of His clemency towards us? O happy occasions of merit—whereby payment for our own debts is placed within our reach! If we are wise, we shall not refuse the means of giving back to God that which we owe Him.

COLLOQUY.

The most pressing of my wants, O my God, is to be delivered from the immense debts, which through my great fault, I have contracted with Thee. Dare I ask Thee to forgive me these, as I have forgiven those slight debts that others may have contracted in my regard? What proportion is there between mine and theirs? what comparison between the indulgence I have shewn, and Thine infinite goodness? Remove from me all resentment and susceptibility; and help me henceforth to merit Thy clemency and the pardon of my trespasses, by a sincere and ready forgiveness of those who trespass against me. O Sacred Heart of Jesus! communicate to my heart Thine own most perfect charity.

RESOLUTION.

Never to keep an angry, uncharitable feeling in my heart, towards one who may have offended me.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Twelfth Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

The Lord's Prayer: sixth request.

Lead us not into temptation.—S. MATT. VI.

I. PRELUDE.

We are to-day to learn from the Lips of Jesus how to profit by temptations; and by claiming the help of God, ensure victory over them.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O God, to understand how great our weakness is, and the need we all have of Thy succour to keep us from falling.

I. POINT.

That the advantages we may derive from temptations are great.

We are warned repeatedly by the Saints that none should expect to be free from temptation. They one and all bear witness to the truth of Holy Scripture on this subject. Saint Anthony says: "The demons are the mortal enemies of all Christians, but especially of those whose lives are in an especial manner consecrated to God: they weary not of spreading their snares, in order to pervert them". "Nothing pleases the devils better," says Saint Hilary, "than to gain some advantage over those who are advanced in

sanctity." And this—because they are wishing to belong entirely to Jesus, and to please Him. The devils watch with deadly hatred the actions of Jesus' friends, and never cease to plan their destruction. We need to be cautioned continually against these inveterate enemies; we should be always prepared to fight with them. That God would exempt us from temptation, we are not taught to pray; but that He will never permit us to be vanquished by it. In fact, the attacks of our foes, if we lose no time in repulsing them, far from harming us, serve very certainly to strengthen us in virtue, elevate us towards perfection, and render us more pleasing to the Divine Majesty! From the malice of the enemy we may suffer, but let us suffer courageously—gladly; for we gain at the same time the inestimable advantage of being exercised in humility. God's powerful protection is encircling us. Harassed though we may be, we should, like Saint James *count it all joy: knowing that the trying of our faith worketh patience: And patience hath a perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire: failing in nothing.*

II. POINT.

Though it is advantageous to endure temptation, we must be careful never to rely on our own strength. •

God allows us to be assailed by temptation, nevertheless He has distinctly promised that *He will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear.* With His grace we may overcome the most furious and prolonged assault; without His grace, not even the least. It is this thought—that God Himself metes out the measure of our temptations—which has filled the Saints with courage and

confidence. *If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear*, we may say with the Psalmist, *for the Lord is the Protector of my life : of whom shall I be afraid ?* Yet we know that it is not permitted for us to expose ourselves to temptation—to seek it in any way ; but on the contrary to avoid all occasions of sin ; and most fervently pray : *Lead us not into temptation*, O my God. For, as Saint Augustine says : “ we are so weak and inconstant, that we often fall through small temptations into greater ones ”. Therefore, far from running into them, we should act as the most faithful friends of God have done—to have an unbounded trust in Him with regard to the greatest—and be distrustful of ourselves with regard to the smallest ; remembering that it is these which have been the cause of the most terrible crimes—the beginning of those evils which have precipitated so many poor souls into the abyss of hell. Perhaps, for instance, the temptation to slothfulness has been allowed to give rise to unpunctuality in the performing of some religious duty of obligation ; and the fault is repeated, insensibly perhaps relaxation ensues, and sooner or later there is a deplorable fall. God’s grace was not invoked in the first slight temptation, because it was considered too small to be feared. If we really knew how prejudicial temptations are, when we rashly run into them on our own responsibility as it were, we should pray with greater fervour : *O God ! lead us not into temptation.*

COLLOQUY.

O my God, how wonderful are Thy designs regarding Thine elect ! Notwithstanding their natural weakness, Thou permittest them to be exposed to the malice of their enemies : but then the power of Thy grace, and the fidelity of Thy

friends are to be thus made manifest. When a tempted soul triumphs over the forces of hell, this miracle is witnessed by the Angels, causing them to exult, and praise the greatness of Thy strength, *made perfect in infirmity*. If it be Thy holy will to purify my soul, O God, in this furnace—to bless me by causing me to endure temptation—let me repose on Thee in the midst of these fiery trials, and never forget Thy promise that *when I have been proved, I shall receive the crown of life*.

RESOLUTION.

To watch over my senses—to be prompt to discover the artifices of the enemy—and however slight a temptation may be, to repulse it at once, calling on God for assistance.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Lead us not into temptation.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Twelfth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

The Lord's Prayer: seventh request.

Deliver us from evil.—S. MATT. VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Remaining at the Feet of Jesus with His Disciples, we

listen to the concluding petition of the prayer He directs us constantly to use.

II. PRELUDE.

Deign, O Good Master, to enlighten our souls with Thy grace, that we may comprehend the evil we have most to fear.

I. POINT.

Sin and its consequences are the only real evils to be dreaded.

Already we have seen that sin (to which we are liable to be led on, through temptation) is so great an evil that in order to avoid it, we must incessantly fight—do violence to ourselves, and suffer anything rather than commit an offence against God. For sin is the evil that He hates—it is the cause of disease, and death of the body,—and the eternal death of the soul is its ultimate consequence. In this last petition, *Deliver us from evil*, we beseech our Heavenly Father to save us from sin and the punishments it deserves. And Holy Church teaches her children the importance of asking God for deliverance from the temporal and eternal effects of sin, by the words in which the Priest, during the holy Sacrifice of the Mass extends the final supplication of the Lord's Prayer: *Deliver us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present, and to come by the assistance of Thy mercy may we be always free from sin, and secure from all disturbance.* Visit us not, O God, with afflictions and calamities, which might be to us an occasion of falling—or might produce in us a spirit of forgetfulness and neglect touching our duties towards Thee. Let us not sink into such extreme indigence as might provoke us to murmur—give rise to despair—en-

feeble our faith. Preserve us from pestilence, and those scourges of war and famine which we acknowledge that we merit through our abuse of Thy benefits. Deliver us from the greatest evil—an unprepared-for death. If it be Thy holy will, O God, may we be fortified by the Sacraments of Holy Church in our dying hour.

II. POINT.

What we must do to be preserved from evils which are not merely temporal in their effects, but eternal.

Deliver us, O God, from the many forms of spiritual evil by which we are surrounded, and which may prove fatal to the soul. How infectious are the maladies to which it is subject! how universal the contagion of sin! Firstly, we ought to fear not only grievous sin, but seek to be rescued from the subtle power of less evident evil: for instance, tepidity and negligence in the service of God—slight resistance to His grace—those habitual faults which, although they do not cause us to leave the path of piety, yet greatly impede our progress therein. In order to be removed from the danger of falling, the next means at our disposal are not merely negative, but positive. By a practical use of God's grace, we must seriously apply ourselves to heavenly things,—gain more religious fervour—and above all, seek to maintain ourselves continually in the Presence of God. We must frequently meditate on all that tends to elevate our hearts and minds—and to disengage them from becoming earth-bound. May we not say with Saint John: *The whole world is seated in wickedness*, from which do Thou, O God, to Whom we belong, deliver us! And the third means presupposes the use of the foregoing. The sovereign preserva-

tive against the mighty power of evil, is the yet mightier power of divine love. If we keep its sacred flame ever burning brightly in our hearts, no harm can approach us—evil is put to flight—interior darkness is dispelled—tepidity is changed into fervour—suffering is transmuted into purest joy. We ask our Heavenly Father to deliver us from all harm, confidently appealing to His promise: *The Lord will keep thee from all evil: He keepeth all them that love Him.*

COLLOQUY.

I beseech Thee, O my God, ever more to watch over me and protect me from all dangers both of body and soul. I am surrounded by them continually; if left to myself I must inevitably perish, but may *my enemies seek my soul in vain, while I rejoice under the covert of Thy wings.* Fill my soul with such love for Thyself, O Heavenly Father, that like a true child I may trust entirely in Thy paternal goodness; being sure that Thou wilt *deliver me from evil.* Amen.

RESOLUTION.

I will confide myself more entirely to the loving care of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Deliver us from evil.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Twelfth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

The Lord's Prayer : its comprehensiveness.

Your Father knoweth what is needful for you before you ask. . . . Let your petitions be made known to God.—
S. MATT. VI. . . . PHIL. IV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us once again call to mind the comprehensiveness of the sublime Prayer Jesus taught His disciples, when they asked Him to teach them how to pray.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, through Whom we approach the Father, make, we beseech Thee, our prayers to be ever acceptable in His sight.

I. POINT.

How much is contained in the Lord's Prayer.

So short—so simple—and yet exhaustive ! The Lord's Prayer sums up all our needs both for soul and body.—We find that the three first petitions relate to the advancing of God's glory, and the last four to the procuring of our salvation ; and what more can we desire of Him ? Its perfect realisation forms a compendium of Jesus' Mission on earth ; and of our own also, as the extension of His. If we are, as it were, putting the Lord's Prayer into daily practice, we shall be able to say with our Divine Master at our life's end : *Father ! I have glorified Thee*

on the earth—I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do. We appeal to God for His help to enable us to sanctify His holy Name—to promote the coming of His Kingdom—to do His Will most perfectly ; all which was done by His Well-Beloved Son. . . . Jesus declares Himself to be *the Living Bread which came down from Heaven* : on this supersubstantial Bread do we not daily feed, either by actual or spiritual Communion ? *God has given us His Son—how hath He not also with Him, given us all things ?* We act in union with our Lord when we practise charity in its highest form—loving to forgive. By prayer, by good example, by patient endurance of suffering, we lessen the power of evil in the world : as we ask to be delivered from it ourselves, God by our instrumentality, weakens and destroys the work of His enemies : He is giving the increase to our labours, and permitting us to be His coadjutors. . . . If we make our examen sometimes on the different parts of the prayer, Jesus in His Wisdom has taught us, we shall be greatly helped to see in which points we are deficient with regard to our primary duties of serving God, and of working out our salvation.

II. POINT.

How we acknowledge the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of Mary, in our more ordinary prayers.

Our petitions may be sometimes selfish in their aim—we may find it difficult to shape them aright—they may be very imperfect in many ways—but if we use this perfect model of prayer, which as a most precious legacy our Divine Master has left us, at the very outset all idea of selfishness is expunged—one does not pray for one's self alone.—We can never be wrong in *letting our petitions be made known to God*

through the medium of this perfect prayer ; and they surely please God who make frequent use of it : bringing their desires into accordance with its spirit. We shew our gratitude and confidence towards Jesus by the reverent and constant repetition of it ; and also by adding those Heaven-dictated words, which have in all ages proclaimed throughout the length and breadth of the earth, the joyous Mystery of His Incarnation. What more significant of our firm belief in this dogma than the renewal of the act of faith, and love, and adoration, inspired by the Blessed Spirit, and taught us by the Angel Gabriel : *Hail Mary ! full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb—Jesus !* conceived by the Holy Ghost, to Whom we also hereby pay our homage. What more complete acknowledgment of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, in union with that of the Incarnation, can exist, than that expressed by the linking together of the Paternoster and Ave Maria ? Holy Church has united them indissolubly, and her faithful children love to have it so. We turn to the Immaculate Mother of Jesus—our Lord God—who interests herself in the obtaining of our petitions : in a true spirit of humility, impressed with a sense of our unworthiness, we should ask her to intercede for us ; not only at the moment in which we now pray, but also at the hour of our death. Do we appreciate these perfect prayers, and rightly use them ? They are a treasure involving responsibility, as every real treasure must infallibly do : upon this we do well to meditate, and examine ourselves.

COLLOQUY.

May I henceforth hold in higher reverence the “ Our Father and Hail Mary ! ” O Jesus, help me to repeat Thy

words of prayer with greater confidence and recollectedness. O Holy Spirit, Spouse of the Blessed Mother of our Lord ! inspire me with a truer devotion towards the Mystery of the Incarnation, which should indeed be the constant theme of my acts of praise and adoration. Oh, that my life might be a perpetual prayer, each deed an act of loving gratitude. On Thy intercession do I rely, O Blessed Virgin Mary, now, and at the hour of my death.

RESOLUTION.

To live nearer to God in the true spirit of prayer.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

The continual prayer of a just man availeth much.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Thirteenth Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

The Cure of the Ten Lepers.

As JESUS entered into a certain town, there met Him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off ; and lifted up their voice saying : JESUS, Master, have mercy on us ; whom when He saw, He said : go, shew yourselves to the priests ; and it came to pass, as they went, they were made clean ; and one of them when he saw that he was made clean, went back ; with a loud voice, glorifying God, and he fell on his face before His

Feet, giving thanks : and this was a Samaritan ; and Jesus answering said : were not ten made clean ? and where are the nine ? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger ; and He said to him : arise, go thy way, for thy faith hath made thee whole.—S. LUKE XVII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves these ten men who were lepers : seeing Jesus in the distance, they cried out to Him for pity.

II. PRELUDE.

Inspire us with great fervour, O God, in soliciting Thy gifts ; and above all, fill our hearts with lively gratitude for all the benefits Thou dost confer on us.

I. POINT.

Ingratitude displeases God, and renders us unworthy of His favours.

We are moved to compassion at the sight of the afflicted condition of the ten lepers : their faith, their confidence in Jesus edifies us ; but the little gratitude which nearly all evinced, after they had been cured, inspires us with a feeling akin to horror. Jesus, in His deep humility, after having performed miracles which witnessed to His wonderful power, forbade those on whom it was exercised, to publish them : He was however deeply affected at their neglecting to give thanks to God for their recovery. He thus complains : *Were there not ten made clean ? And where are the nine ? There is no one found to return, and give glory to God, but this stranger.* How considerable is the number of

ungrateful persons ! It is but too evident that the larger proportion never think of Him who bestows such benefits upon them. Out of ten lepers only one shewed any gratitude : and this one a Samaritan—a stranger ; whilst the others belonged to His chosen people. This history has been often, alas ! repeated : the most favoured by God have proved the most forgetful of Him. How many Christians—how many Religious—set apart to be *a holy nation, a purchased people*, fail in gratitude. If we are the continual objects of the charity of Jesus, where are the proofs of a grateful remembrance of this high privilege ? Are we truly penetrated with thankful love towards our Divine Benefactor ? full of zeal in His service ? eager to praise Him ? to publish His goodness—His power ? Let us see if we can do otherwise than condemn ourselves, as our Lord condemned the nine lepers.

II. POINT.

The beauty of gratitude.

We can well understand that ingratitude dries up, after a while, the source of Divine favours : like an arid wind it absorbs the dew of His blessing. On the contrary, gratitude has truly a marvellous power over the Heart of God ; a gentle force which obtains fresh and abundant streams of grace from Him. A thankful soul gains the confidence of Jesus ; He delights in pouring upon it His best gifts, because He knows how highly each one will be prized. What are our feelings when we find that our gifts are not in the least valued ? that our endeavours to benefit others are unnoticed ? Are we not naturally indignant when treated with coldness and ingratitude where we have a right to expect that our proofs of love—our sacrifices perhaps—would have

been appreciated. And how beautiful in our eyes is gratitude! Does it not induce us to repeat our gifts? to renew with increased pleasure those efforts to gratify others to which affection prompts us? From these personal considerations we may easily gather what a great offence against God ingratitude must be. When we think of all He has done for us, must we not own that we have been sadly wanting in the matter of thankfulness: have we not perhaps on this account often frustrated the grace of God? He is jealous of His glory, and desires that we should be convinced that we can do nothing of ourselves—that we have unceasing need of His help—that it is He *Who giveth us abundantly all things to enjoy*. And with all truth we may reverently say: how grateful God is to us! How He pours forth His thanks in benedictions! with what rewards does he enrich us, when we do the least thing for His sake alone! Do we not know, by experience, what the grateful love of God is?

COLLOQUY.

It would seem an impossibility that Thou, Who art the Giver of all that I possess, could ever have cause to complain of my being ungrateful to Thee, my constant Benefactor! And yet it would be a most just reproach that too often *I have not been found to return and give glory to Thee*, after I have been actually conscious of having received some direct favour at Thy hands.—And for all the daily, hourly blessings both temporal and spiritual, Thou sendest me, how little, how unworthily, do I thank Thee. Give me grace, O Jesus, often to recal Thy words spoken to the leper; so that I may become more thoroughly grateful: and whenever I may have obtained some special grace, may I be prompt in rendering special thanks to God for it.

RESOLUTION.

To strive to increase in gratitude, by meditating on God's manifold mercies.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things He hath rendered to me?

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Thirteenth Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

Motives of confidence in prayer.

Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you.—S. MATT. VII.

I. PRELUDE.

We see Jesus proceeding with His Sermon on the Mount. He now again turns the attention of His hearers to the subject of prayer.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Lord, that praying to Thee with confidence, we may obtain, of Thy infinite goodness, all the graces necessary for our sanctification.

I. POINT.

God hears our prayers always, when they are rightly offered.

It is impossible to imagine a promise more distinct, or more fitted to inspire us with confidence, than that which Jesus makes in these words: *Ask, and it shall be given you.* He, the Eternal Truth, undertakes to shed forth His blessings upon all who ask Him for them. What goodness on the part of our Divine Lord! And how is it to be explained, that we still languish in the midst of spiritual indigence? Having permission to go to the Fountain-Head of all grace, how is it that we are yet so devoid of goodness? What defects have we corrected in ourselves? Which of the solid virtues have we acquired? Is our natural character changed for the better? are our passions more under control? God is not unfaithful to His promise: therefore, if we have not obtained the graces we need, the fault plainly lies with ourselves. And yet during many years we have certainly been praying—but how? We pray every day—we visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament;—but how do we spend those precious moments? Perhaps we give no real thought to what we say—care very little as to whether or no we obtain what we ask for—*drawing near to God with our mouth, and glorifying Him with our lips, but with hearts far from Him.* When the Divine Master promises us all things necessary for us, He lays down certain conditions that we have to fulfil. He wills that we should desire His gifts—ask for them with fervour and perseverance—pray with holy importunity. Great cause have we to humble ourselves in God's sight, as we see how indifferent we have often been when making our petitions before His throne of grace; and to make a firmer resolution to pray better.

II. POINT.

God delights especially in answering those prayers, which have for their object the furtherance of our salvation.

Although God, our Father, bids us make known to Him all our wants, both in the order of nature and of grace, He wills that our prayers by preference, should be for spiritual blessings. Jesus proves this to us by a most touching comparison: *What man is there amongst you of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he reach him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from Heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?* Can He refuse us grace—light—virtue—perfection, after having promised us the Holy Spirit, Who is the Author and Source of all these? No! for He assures us that, if we ask in faith and confidence, we shall certainly obtain this Best Gift, and in possessing this Gift, possess all other good things. But where then is our obstacle? It lies in this: we fear the trouble of having to ask with fervour—to seek with constancy—to knock with gentle violence, and untiringly. The children of this world are not afraid to sacrifice their health and strength—life often, to gain some earthly trifle—honour, riches, distinction: and we! how little do we sacrifice ourselves in order to win the best gifts of our Heavenly Father. . . . If God appear not to hear our supplications, if He prove us by permitting us to experience aridity or temptation in the time of prayer, let us not cease to pray on that account, but trust all the more in His goodness and mercy. It is the prayer of the humble with which He is most pleased—and the truly humble offer their petitions again and again, and wait God's own time for

the answer. *Mercy shall encompass him that hopeth in the Lord.*

COLLOQUY.

I adore Thee, O Jesus, and I thank Thee, because Thou hast taught me how to pray in order to be heard and answered. I see how defective my prayers are : how weary and impatient I become when an answer to them is deferred. Give me then, I beseech Thee, more confidence in God's most sure promise, so that I may never grow discouraged ; and more perseverance. *Let nothing hinder me from praying always, remembering that the reward of God continueth for ever.*

RESOLUTION.

To ask often during this day, for the true spirit of prayer.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Ask, and it shall be given you.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Thirteenth Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

On Rash Judgment.

Judge not, that you may not be judged : for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged : and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again : And why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thine own eye.—S. MATT. VII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us receive attentively this further precept on the subject of charity, which the Divine Master adds to those He has already laid down.

II. PRELUDE.

Adorable Heart of our Saviour, communicate to our hearts Thine own sentiments of love ; and thereby constrained to judge favourably of our brethren, may we merit to receive a favourable judgment from Thyself, O God.

I. POINT.

The right of judging belongs to God alone.

Judge not that you may not be judged. It was not to the untutored multitude only that Jesus addressed these words ; but He wished His Apostles also early to learn this lesson : that however advanced any might become in sanctity, God reserves to Himself the right of judging. He only is capable of forming a sure judgment, for He sees the heart, and weighs the intentions. Jesus, to prove that He delegated to none the power of judging infallibly, declared that He Himself, as Man, *judged not any man*. Some in consequence of the position in which they are placed, are indeed required to study character ; sometimes to take notice of others' failings ; but how doubly necessary is it that they do this in a spirit of charity, lest they contract the dangerous habit of criticising, and so become censorious ? *Who art thou*, each one of us may well ask himself in the words of Saint Paul, *that judgest another man's servant ? To his own Lord he standeth or falleth*. It should be our general practice to close our

eyes to the faults of others, and see only their good qualities, deriving edification therefrom. After the example of the saintly bishop of Geneva "let us, if an action has a hundred aspects, look always at the one which is the most beautiful". They who are animated with the spirit of Jesus, form the habit of so doing ; and thus draw upon themselves the mercy of God,—as they have judged so will they be judged. Happy the abode where rash, unkind judgment may not enter ; for in it peace and love reign conjointly.

II. POINT.

We should abstain from judging others, because human judgment is usually false and unjust.

Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye? Ordinarily we judge, not according to the reality of things, but according to the impression they make on us. Often our prejudices form our motives in judging others ; or our passions blind us to the truth, whilst they at the same time, magnify the slightest defects into grave faults. How many actual sins do censorious persons commit : far, far more serious than those which they imagine they perceive in their neighbour, and hesitate not to charge them with. Honour, respect, esteem, love—due to others, wither before the breath of criticism. If we look into the recesses of our heart and mind, are we not forced to acknowledge that we do compare ourselves with others ; and that self-esteem causes us often to prefer ourselves to them : and this secret preference is accompanied by a feeling of contempt for those whom we consider our inferiors. We perhaps are putting a wrong construction on actions which are good in God's sight. The mist of aversion would

be dispelled if the light of this truth illuminated our mind: He Who said : *judge not*, is at this moment condemning my want of charity ; whilst He looks down approvingly on my neighbour, whom I am censuring unjustly. Is not this single consideration sufficient to cure us of forming rash judgments ?

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, my Light and my Helper ! I beseech Thee let me see the hatefulness of judging others uncharitably as Thou dost see it ; and then let Thy grace aid me in combating this inclination I have to criticise and condemn. I know but too well that jealousy and self-esteem give rise to feelings of dislike and disdain. I promise Thee that I will henceforth ask myself when tempted to be censorious, whether I ought not rather to be framing other thoughts which would be in harmony with Thine—full of charity.

RESOLUTION.

To pass judgment on myself when tempted to judge others.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Judge not, that you may not be judged.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Thirteenth Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

Jesus is the Foundation-Stone of our Sanctification.

Every one therefore that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock.—S. MATT. VII.

I. PRELUDE.

We hear to-day the last words of instruction given by our Divine Teacher in His Sermon on the Mount.

II. PRELUDE

O Jesus, Thou art the Foundation-Stone of the edifice of our sanctification : we know that all solid virtue rests on Thee ; may we be built up as living temples to Thy honour and glory.

I. POINT.

No virtue is solid, unless Jesus be its Foundation.

Jesus, being on the point of terminating His discourse, in which He had given an abridgement of evangelical doctrine, and rules for a life of perfection, calls the attention of His disciples to the importance of the truths He had just enunciated, and the obligation they were under of practising them, by His concluding words : *Every one therefore that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock : And every one*

that heareth these My words, and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. They then only are wise and prudent, who, having the happiness of being instructed in the school of Jesus, concerning His most holy Life and Doctrine, are not contented with the gratification afforded by simply listening to the words of His Gospel, but diligently apply themselves to understand His divine lessons, and conform their conduct to them. Thus will their edifice of perfection be solid. Around it the winds of temptation may blow, the floods of adversity may beat, the rain of sorrow may heavily descend, but *the house falls not that is founded on the rock.* If we rest on Jesus we shall never be moved : He will communicate to us His Divine strength.—But most unhappy and culpable are we if, with the words of our Master sounding in our ears, we are building up an exterior appearance of piety—based upon the maxims and customs of the world—upon the quicksands of its false principles. A downfall sooner or later is inevitable: from such a spiritual disaster ever preserve us, O God !

II. POINT.

How we are to found on Jesus Christ the edifice of our perfection.

If we would found the spiritual building of our perfection on Jesus Christ, we must diligently conform ourselves to the practice of those virtues which are so pre-eminently His own : such as—humility, meekness, self-abnegation, charity : and on these to continue our whole life's work, of adding stone to stone, one degree of holiness to another. Our whole spiritual being must take its rise from the principle of union with Jesus ; His virtues must supplant the vices that are in us—and His merits must in the sight of the

Heavenly Father, compensate for our demerits. We must depend on Jesus—work with Him to make our lives resemble His Life—shaping them according to the example of perfection He has shewn us. He was unmoved by the opinion—the praise or dispraise of the world; unshaken by the fury of His enemies. He was strong in the strength of divine power : though *rejected indeed by men, He was chosen and made honourable by God*. If we resemble this Living Stone—elect, precious—we too shall be despised and rejected by the world ; but deriving all force and solidity from It, we also *as living stones shall be built up, a spiritual house—a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ*—the Rock—the Support of our Salvation.

COLLOQUY.

Keep me, O my Saviour, from ever resting my eternal hopes on the sandy foundation of natural goodness, or the morality of the world. *No other foundation can any man lay, but that which is laid, which is Thyself*. In whom, in what can I find stability save in Thee, the Rock of my confidence? Built up in Thee—Who art all my Strength—may I be strong to resist the spiritual tempests which may vent their fury around me ; and to bear up against the storms of adversity with courage, not my own, but derived from union with Thee. O All-powerful Jesus! by laying the stones of solid virtues, one by one on so sure a Foundation, may the edifice of my perfection be at length complete.

RESOLUTION.

Having heard the words and wishes of Jesus, I will act more in accordance with them.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He is the Support of my Salvation.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Thirteenth Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

The great Supper to which we are invited.

A certain man made a great Supper and invited many : And he sent his servants at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited, that they should come ; for now all things are ready.—S. LUKE XIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus bidding His servants make known to those whom He has invited, that the great Supper is ready, which He has Himself prepared.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, Who dost desire so ardently to be the daily Food of our souls, grant that we may not lose the privilege of receiving Thee in Holy Communion, by our fault.

I. POINT.

We should make it evident that the Holy Eucharist is the chief means of rendering our lives more holy.

Our Lord is that certain Man Who has Himself prepared a great Supper, to which He invites each one of us. The invitation is given in Holy Baptism, and we are taught to prepare for it ; to be ready, waiting for the moment when we shall be called to partake of the Celestial Food which is to nourish our souls unto life eternal. When once we have been guests at the Eucharistic Banquet, we are expected to frequent it ; fully assured that we shall receive a welcome from the Giver of the Feast. And we have also to perform the part of His servants, as far as we can ; bearing a message to such as seem to have forgotten their invitation ; —persuading others (who may have furnished themselves with excuses) to reconsider their intention of making them. *Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which doth not satisfy you ?* What earthly pleasure can be compared with the delights of Thy Sanctuary, O Lord ? What worldly intercourse can be preferred to the intercourse of the soul with Jesus, when He makes Himself known in the breaking of Bread ? He imparts to the soul strength, joy, and peace, which the world has no more power to give, than it has to take away. We must attract others to come and share in the privileges we enjoy, by evidencing our real faith in the ineffable Mystery of the Altar ; and an increasing love for, and appreciation of, the spiritual benefits thereby bestowed.

II. POINT.

The happy effects of the Eucharistic Feast.

The Blessed Sacrament is the most efficacious means for rendering all the children of the Church more worthy of their vocation—since all are called to be Saints. In partaking of the Lord's Supper, union is established between

God and ourselves—concord between the guests who gather round the Holy Table. Invited there, it is with the understanding that the words of the Psalmist are to find their realisation in the lives of those who are fed with the same Bread of Life: *Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!* And surely no bond of union can be so sacred, so productive of mutual charity, as that which draws us into the closest union with Jesus and with all His faithful members. Saint Augustine calls the Eucharist the “Sign of Unity,” the “Bond of Love”. A fervent communicant, whose religious influence inspires in others the desire for more frequent Communion, procures far more real good—promotes the benefit of his fellow-creatures far more lastingly, than all the teaching of moral philosophy; and has effectively more power to lessen evil, and to prevent grievous sin, than the civil authority with all its restraining, controlling force. The Holy Eucharist is the great means of making us a holy people, since It strengthens us against the weakness of nature, and is a preservative against sin. How can we thank our Dear Lord as we ought for having given us the invitation to come to the Banquet He has prepared? for having sent His servants to bring us to the holy House of His Church, of which He says: *This is my rest: here will I dwell, for I have chosen it: I will satisfy Her poor with Bread: I will clothe Her Priests with salvation: and Her Saints shall rejoice with exceeding great joy.* Have we availed ourselves with loving hearts of the invitation to the Great Supper? Have we brought even one other guest with us? Are we living Eucharistic lives?

COLLOQUY.

O my Jesus! what can I do to show my gratitude to Thee

for having invited me to Thy Holy Table? As I contemplate Thy love for me, I think of all the grief endured by Thy Sacred Heart, on account of those who excuse themselves, and will not come to be fed with the Bread of Life. Wilt Thou not let us assuage that grief, by endeavouring to inspire others with a desire to taste those spiritual delights which Thou dost Thyself prepare for us at the Eucharistic Feast! Grant me this grace, O Sweet Jesus; and unite me more and more closely to Thyself, in the bonds of Sacramental Love.

RESOLUTION.

To do all I can to make Jesus in the Holy Eucharist more loved.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

A certain Man made a great Supper.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Thirteenth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

Love of Suffering.

JESUS said: I have a Baptism, wherewith I am to be baptised: and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?—
S. LUKE XII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us listen with profound reverence to these words of our Lord, in which He tells us of His longing desire to suffer in our stead.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us, O Saviour, such ardent love for Thee, that we too may desire to suffer—in union with Thee—somewhat of the penalty due to God's divine justice.

I. POINT.

It was Jesus' love for us, which caused Him to desire sufferings.

How expressive are these words of our Loving Saviour ! *I have a Baptism wherewith I am to be baptised : and how am I straitened until it be accomplished ?* What more fitting ones could be used, to make us comprehend the ardour with which Jesus desired to suffer for us ! He applies the word Baptism to His Passion—because in His Precious Blood, shed in such abundance, He would literally be immersed : and this Baptism He longed to receive. And if we inquire why our Lord evinced so intense a desire even to anticipate the supreme hour of His suffering for mankind, there can be but this reply : *He loved us.* And His love was ready to brave unparalleled torments, deepest humiliation, and the death of a malefactor in order to save us from eternal suffering—unending death. The Master dies to give life to His servants ! Is it possible that a single creature breathes, who is not willing to be the disciple of so generous—so disinterested—so self-sacrificing a Master ? Alas ! In these our days He is ignored—despised—outraged : and an eternity of pain and death is chosen rather than the happiness of living for ever with Him. Oh ! how hard, how cold must be those hearts which do not melt beneath the genial influence of Jesus' ardent love. While we mourn with Him

over those who will not believe in Him, let us beseech our Lord to discover to us more and more His immense charity, that it may triumph over our yet lingering indifference about His sufferings; and our want of courage to endure somewhat, at least, for His sake.

II. POINT.

For love of Jesus we ought to accept the sufferings He sends us.

The chief characteristic of real love is, that it delights in suffering for the person loved. Thus it was with the love of Jesus. Do our hearts respond to the generous sentiments of His Loving Heart? We may judge of this by our generosity in the service of God. We do not, it is true, refuse to love Jesus; we desire, even greatly perhaps, to do so: but when it is a question of mortifying our natural inclinations, of imposing on ourselves some mortification, of denying our senses some legitimate gratification, where is our courage? Is it nature or grace that generally gains the victory? When God honours us by calling us to share in bearing the weight of affliction He laid on His Well-Beloved Son, how do we accept this most enviable distinction? Judging from the pains we habitually take to shield ourselves from little inconveniences—a small amount of trouble—the mere thought of suffering, it is to be feared that our love is still very feeble; that we are far from being able to repeat after our Divine Saviour: *I have a baptism of suffering wherewith to be baptised, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.* And yet we may not deceive ourselves! If we do not participate really in this desire, our love for Him cannot be resembling His love for us. Even His love, proved by His Life of Sacrifice, will not avail to save us,

unless we contribute to our own salvation by being truly generous—mortified—penitent—enduring.

COLLOQUY.

No, Lord ! it is not right nor just that the servant should be entirely spared, and the Master's suffering be wholly unshared by those for whom He has suffered. Thou didst love me so greatly as to die for me; and should I not deem myself unhappy indeed, if not permitted even to taste of Thy bitter chalice? Increase in me, I beseech Thee, a desire to endure pain, under whatever form Thou mayst be pleased to send it to me; and give me courage to accept it as a token of Thy confidence in my love.

RESOLUTION.

To look forward to suffering with a desire to resemble Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Love is strong as death.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Thirteenth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

We must labour to attain salvation.

A certain man said to JESUS: Are there few that be saved?—

S. LUKE XIII.

I. PRELUDE.

We represent to ourselves a certain man from amongst the crowd which surrounded our Lord, asking the question of Him: *Are there few that be saved?*

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Jesus, to meditate aright concerning this question which was proposed to Thee; thinking seriously of the answer Thou didst make, and applying it to ourselves.

I. POINT.

It is not necessary to salvation to know God's unrevealed secrets—but we must labour to merit Heaven.

Doubtless it was a motive of curiosity which prompted the question: *Are there few that be saved?* but our Lord permits it to be recorded for our instruction, that we may gather from the manner in which He made the reply, how unnecessary—how unwarrantable—are questions upon such matters as God, in His infinite wisdom, intends to keep secret from us. Of what avail would it be to us did we know the number of the elect? He Who is the Incarnate Wisdom, indicates by the answer He gave on this occasion, what our line of thought should be, if doubts and difficulties

suggest themselves to our minds concerning predestination, or the fewness of the elect, or similar questions. Without losing even a moment in wishing to penetrate these inscrutable secrets, let us thank our Lord God for having placed us in a state of salvation, and say within ourselves: Jesus wills to save us—He died for all men—He offers to all graces necessary to salvation; while on some He bestows special graces, to enable them, if they will, to attain to the heights of perfection. This is all we need know: it is the practice of the virtues of our Great Example that will save us. *Strive*—is His own word of counsel—of energy, spoken to us all. Strive—agonise—to enter Heaven by the path, narrow though it be, which leads directly there. We cannot miss it,—for being the way of the Cross, we see all along it the Footprints of Jesus, tracing out its course. All His Saints have likewise trodden it.

II. POINT.

In order to merit Heaven we must labour with courage and fidelity.

Our Lord was on His way to His dread Passion and Death, when He was interrogated concerning the number of those who would have the courage and fidelity to follow Him to the end. He had already, at the beginning of His Ministry, spoken this precept: *Enter ye in at the narrow gate.* To show that this necessitates strenuous efforts on man's part, He then added: *Strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!* Now towards the close of His public career, He makes use of the same argument: the way to Heaven is not smooth and easy, many do not venture to face its difficulties at all—many again turn back after a while; few, in comparison, persevere until death.

In comparison—for Saint John is permitted to make known to us that he saw a great multitude of those who were in Heaven, and that no man could number them: of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues: but when he asked: *Who are these?—whence come they?* one of the ancients answered him: *These are they who are come out of great tribulation.* The life of the just on earth is a time of strife: great efforts have to be made: there are daily, and often painful sacrifices to undergo. Do we actually know this by experience? If so, we may confidently hope that God will number us amongst His Saints, in glory everlasting. Let us accompany Jesus on the path that leads through suffering; drawing more closely to Him to-day, as He shews us that He has no new rule of life to lay down for His disciples. *They must strive.*

COLLOQUY.

O my Dear Lord! help me to see if I am really striving to reach Heaven by the narrow way of holiness. Banish from my mind all the subtle questionings of an idle curiosity, and fill it with thoughts of the seriousness of my life's work—that of saving my soul. Let me keep the example of Thine own Life of humiliation and suffering ever before my eyes; and thank Thee for every opportunity Thou dost afford me of bearing some mortification—overcoming some difficulty—taking a real step onwards, at the cost of some sacrifice, made for Thy Sake.

RESOLUTION.

To strive with more energy to advance in the way of salvation.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

In all things we overcome, because of Him that loved us.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Fourteenth Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

On the abandonment of ourselves to Divine Providence.

Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat : nor for your body, what you shall put on : Is not the life more than the meat : and the body than the raiment ?—S. MATT. VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us admire the tender, thoughtful love with which Jesus persuades us to expect everything from the Hands of God, knowing that He is our Good Father.

II. PRELUDE.

Do Thou, O God, increase in us faith in Thy Divine Providence ; so that resigning all that concerns us into Thy care, we may have no other solicitude than that of pleasing Thee.

I. POINT.

God takes care of all He has created—but particularly of us.

Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on: Is not the life more than the meat: and the body more than the raiment? Enfolded in these words we perceive a most forcible motive for abandoning ourselves entirely to Divine Providence. It is God Who utters them; and not content with only giving us a command to resign into His Hands the guiding and directing of all that concerns us, He so to say, argues the point, in order that all objections may be silenced. He proves that having endowed us with life, He is certainly capable of maintaining it by the bestowal of accessory gifts. God deigns to plead with us on this subject, so desirous is He of gaining our confidence. He reminds us of the care He takes of all that exists; and of the preference He must needs have for us, who are made to His Image. *Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and God feedeth them: Are you not of much more value than they?* And He brings to our notice another reason, which should induce us to believe that He and He only can really provide for us—that we are entirely dependent on Him. *Which of you, our Lord asks, by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If then ye be not able to do so much as the least thing, why are you solicitous for the rest?* We, of ourselves, are utterly powerless; but God is ever attentive to our wants, and will infallibly supply them all. Ought not then the obligation He lays upon us to trust in Him, to become yet more our happiest duty, and sweetest consolation?

II. POINT.

God takes care of us because He is our Father.

Not only are all living creatures watched over by their

Creator, but everything in Nature—even inanimate objects, are covered by His protecting Hand, that they may fulfil the purpose for which they were formed, and serve for the use of man. *Consider the lilies how they grow: they labour not, neither do they spin: But I say to you that not even Solomon in all His glory was clothed like one of these: Now if God clothe in this manner the grass that is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven: how much more you, O ye of little faith?* Are not these words sufficient to fill us with unbounded confidence? What child is there who, seeing his father both rich and powerful, is not thoroughly convinced that he will want for nothing! Doubtless his hopes are well-founded: how much more ours! for all the wealth and power of the world massed together, could not equal those of our Heavenly Father, Whose Heart is more tender towards His children, than that of the best of earthly fathers. How much is contained in these words: *Your Father knoweth that you have need of these things.* My Father knows: does not this thought suffice to calm every anxious fear? let Him give plenteously or sparingly of earthly goods, it is all the same to one who *seeks first the Kingdom of God, and His justice.* Indolence God could never sanction: He wills that all should labour in one way or another; but let us work only for Him, and He will repay us with His benediction. The necessities of life for to-day, will be bestowed upon us from out the treasury of Divine Providence, as those of yesterday were: and *for to-morrow be not solicitous.*

COLLOQUY.

Engrave in my heart, O Lord, this thought: my Father knows all. Never being effaced therefrom, may I find it my constant happiness to abandon myself and all that concerns

me, entirely into Thy holy keeping. Let me dedicate all my work to Thee, and leave its success in Thy hands. May my sole anxiety for the future be to serve Thee, O my God, more faithfully, for Thine own Sake.

RESOLUTION.

To make during this day, frequent acts of resignation to the Holy Will of God in my regard.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Your Father knows that you have need of these things.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fourteenth Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

The Prayer of the Centurion.

When JESUS had entered into Capharnaum, there came to Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying: Lord, my servant lieth at home, sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented: And JESUS saith to him: I will come and heal him: And the centurion making answer said: Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof: but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.—S. MATTHEW VIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine that we see the centurion accosting Jesus; and beseeching Him with all humility and reverence, to heal his servant who was dear to him.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Divine Lord, that we may profit by the practical lessons of faith, charity, and humility afforded us by the centurion.

I. POINT.

We may well take this centurion as our example in many ways.

The virtues which this Roman soldier exhibited are truly worthy of our admiration. His prayer is a model of faith in Jesus—a faith so perfect that it gained His express approbation. It was a lively, active faith. His friends had spoken to him of the power of this Divine Physician; he believed in Him—had immediate recourse to Him, and hastened to make known to Him the precarious condition of his servant's health. This evident humility was a consequence of his faith; and we find from Saint Luke, that at first, he was held back by a sense of his unworthiness, from speaking in person to our Lord. *I am not worthy, he said, that Thou shouldst come under my roof—for which cause neither did I think myself worthy to come to Thee.* His acknowledgment of the sovereign power of Jesus was a further effect of his faith; and to humility he added confidence. *But say the word, Lord, and my servant shall be healed.* What power faith has over the Heart of our Lord, especially when animated by charity! That of the centurion caused Jesus

to exclaim with marked approval : *Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith, not even in Israel* ; rewarding it immediately by the cure of the servant who was so dear to him. We have received the gift of faith : without it we should not be in God's service at all—but do we not let it lie dormant ? or die down perhaps, till it be all but lost ? And yet, how dangerous is this neglect—this lethargy. O God, give to us the simple faith of the centurion ; the energy of which rendered his prayer so effectual, and his line of conduct so edifying.

II. POINT.

Jesus cannot fail to recompense an active faith.

Every page of the holy Gospel brings before our notice the goodness and benevolence of the God-Man : wherever we find Him He is always the same—full of compassion for the infirm and suffering—ready to attend to the petitions, and reward the faith of those who appealed to Him for succour. With what kindness do we now see Him devote His attention to this stranger, as he pleaded for his servant's life. *I will come and heal him*. When our Lord saw the genuineness of his depreciation of his own merits, He accepted the kind courtesy which suggested the idea that He should not trouble Himself to come so far as his house ; He graciously acceded to this proposal, and performed at his request one of His greatest miracles. *Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee ; And the servant was healed at the same hour*. Oh, if we only understood more perfectly how Jesus loves to hear and answer the prayer of simple faith, and to enrich us with spiritual gifts, how much more fervent would our requests be, when like the centurion there is some soul dear to us, for whom

charity urges us to pray. And whatever be the object of our petitions, faith in God—a true conception of what He is, and of what we are—must necessarily increase our humility, and deepen in us the conviction that we are wholly undeserving of the least of His mercies. *Lord, I am not worthy*, we must say in all sincerity, and He will undoubtedly reply: *As thou hast believed, so be it done to thee*. Holy Church has adopted these words for Her children's use, at that supreme moment when Jesus descends from His Altar-throne to enter the dwelling-place of our hearts. In the act of receiving Him are concentrated the virtues of faith, and charity, and humility; while our Divine Guest brings a loving recompense to each faithful soul, and again repeats for our consolation: *As thou hast believed, so be it done to thee*.

COLLOQUY.

I would follow the example of the centurion, and ask my friends (both on earth and in Heaven) to plead for me with Thee, O Jesus; so that my requests may be made known to Thee by many intercessors, and that I may be the more confident of their being granted. Well too may I borrow His words—and say: *Neither thought I myself worthy to come to Thee*. Let faith and love triumph even over that sense of my unworthiness, which might prevent my approaching Thee; especially in Holy Communion. May true humility be increased within me each time Thou dost condescend to visit the poor abode of my heart: *Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed*.

RESOLUTION.

To re-animate my own faith by the recollection of the manner in which Jesus commended that of the centurion.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Say but the word, and my soul shall be healed.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Fourteenth Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

A woman proclaimed aloud the blessedness of Mary.

A certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice, said to Jesus : Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck.—S. LUKE XI.

I. PRELUDE.

We may imaginè the effect which the Presence of the Incarnate God had upon those who saw and heard Him : one there was who, with true motherly instincts, proclaimed her blessed who had the right to call Him her Son.

II. PRELUDE.

As we contemplate Thy adorable perfections, O Son of Mary, may a greater love and admiration be awakened in us for Thyself and Thy dear Mother.

I. POINT.

Mary is worthy of honour, respect, and praise, because she is the Mother of Jesus.

Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed, because He that is Mighty hath done great things in me, exclaimed our Lady, aware of the singular favour that God had accorded to her in causing her to become the Mother of His Son. Blessed art thou amongst women, for *the Lord hath reigned* from the throne prepared for Him in thy chaste womb : *He is clothed with beauty : the Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded Himself* with thy flesh to fight with the enemies of mankind. . . . Mary was truly the "Throne of Solomon," whiter than ivory, purer than the finest gold ; a throne more exquisite in loveliness than those of the greatest kings of the earth—adorned with the fairest workmanship of the God of all perfection. Within the "Tower of David," to which Mary is also likened, our Prince and Saviour took upon Him the Sacred Humanity, incomparable in its power and beauty ; it is the pure blood of the Virgin Mother which ebbs and flows in the Heart of her Son—Jesus. We call them happy and blessed whose salvation is secure, whose earthly race is over ; but death was not to be the commencement of thy blessedness, O holy Mother of God ; for the Mystery of the Incarnation was the sure beginning of thine eternity of divine benediction. Blessed, for ever blessed art thou, who didst bring forth the Saviour ! thou art the Source of salvation to perishing man—and as we watch thee, contemplate thee, from the moment of thy Immaculate Conception—passing along the unexampled course marked out for thee, we can but exclaim : *How beautiful are thy steps*, O Mother of the Lord.

II. POINT.

We must imitate Mary, that we may merit to be called blessed, by God.

The Virgin-Mother merited to be called blessed by all generations—to be honoured with unparalleled honour in all ages—simply because *she heard the word of God and kept it*. This is what our Lord would teach us by His answer to the woman, who proclaimed before the multitude the undoubted blessedness of her whom He called—Mother. He wished that our devotion to her should not end in mere sentiment ; but should unfold into real desires and endeavours to imitate her fidelity, and to share in the benedictions bestowed on her by God. *Yea rather*—before all other considerations—*blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it*. Jesus loved Mary as only such a Son could love such a Mother ; but even this affection never intervened to obscure that primary intention for which He was sent into the world by the Heavenly Father—to secure by every means our salvation—our perfection. It was evident that His Mother must of necessity be the most blessed amongst women—the Angel Gabriel had brought this message to earth direct from Heaven ; therefore Jesus passes over that which is incontrovertible, to avail Himself of this opportunity of pointing out how we too may win God's favour. No position—no earthly greatness—no relationship, even with such as are leading holy lives, can assure to us our salvation ; this is an individual matter for each one : and depends on our *hearing the word of God—and keeping it* : seeking to understand His will, and obeying it. It is true virtue which guarantees our blessedness. That which we have to do is this : to imitate Mary as she imitated Jesus in doing the Will of God most perfectly : and invoke her aid for the obtaining of the grace of a loving obedience.

COLLOQUY.

I understand, O Jesus, that it is not enough for me to

call myself Thy Spouse—to claim Mary as my Mother ! I must see if I am striving to imitate her virtues in order to prove my fidelity to Thee—and am so *hearing the word of God and keeping it*, as to have a good hope that Thou wilt one day say to me : *Come, you blessed of My Father, possess you the Kingdom prepared for you.* Oh ! how inconceivably great will be the happiness of receiving that benediction, which shall introduce me into the company of Thyself, O Jesus, and Thy Mother, never more to leave it.

RESOLUTION.

To be continually seeking to secure God's blessing.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Fourteenth Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

Jesus calls us to enlighten the world.

You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid : No man lighteth a candle, and putteth it in a hidden place, nor under a bushel : but upon a candlestick, that they that come in may see the light : So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, Who is in Heaven.—S. MATT. V. . . S. LUKE XI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us adore Jesus, Who is essentially the Light of the world, but is desirous that His disciples should let the light of their good works also shine.

II. PRELUDE.

O Lord, give us grace to edify others by a good example, since Thou hast chosen us also to be Thy Disciples.

I. POINT.

The doctrine of Jesus, which we should make known, possesses the intrinsic power of illuminating.

Do *all who come in*—all who hold intercourse with us—see the light of our sanctity? We would fain do our part for Jesus, and work efficaciously for the salvation of souls. It is not however, sufficient to speak well of divine things; we must practise the virtues of which we extol the usefulness and beauty. The light of each one's own personal holiness should shed its special lustre upon these virtues, and make them pleasing in the sight of all men. Let us well understand that by helping to awaken a good thought, to arouse a holier aspiration—to forward in any degree the salvation of a soul—we contribute to the work of redemption. Jesus wills that we should so do, in order that we should increase in merit, and advance His Kingdom. But to effect anything real, action must be joined to words. If we would be coadjutors with the Son of God, we must not expect that the Head alone should suffer, and the members live a life of ease: that which cost Him so much, will cost us also toil and mortification—suffering and humiliation—prayers and

tears. These feed the flame of a life of sanctity, and cause its light to be seen, so that those around us *may see our good works, and glorify our Father Who is in Heaven*. We must ourselves be enlightened with the fire of divine love—live in union of suffering with Jesus. By following His example, a truer resemblance will be formed between ourselves and the celestial Light of the world, Who from the Cross shines forth *to draw all men to Himself*. The steadiest, clearest, brightest flame is that which has been enkindled in the purifying furnace of affliction.

II. POINT.

To glorify our Heavenly Father should be our sole motive in all we do.

No man lighteth a candle and putteth it in a hidden place, but upon a candlestick. It is certain that the light of a good example can never be hid. Sooner or later it will shine forth, however faint it may at first appear. But alas! concerning even those to whom our Lord has especially said: *Let your light shine before men*, may not these words be sometimes applied: *They looked for light but behold, darkness*. Never should we imagine that we can pass through the world without making others either better or worse. It is a false humility to think ourselves too humble, too insignificant, or so entirely without influence, as to be irresponsible for the power for good or evil we do possess, be it apparently ever so small. It is incumbent upon each one of us to examine ourselves often, as to our zeal, our earnestness of purpose, in the important matter of edifying our neighbour. In our intercourse one with another, is it the glory of God alone that we seek? Do we afford, under all circumstances, the light of good example? being recollected—as if deeply im-

pressed by the sense of God's Presence? punctual in our religious duties? modest and courteous in our demeanour? gentle in our actions? charitable in speaking? By setting a bad example, we first of all do a great injury to ourselves by the particular fault of omission or commission: would that it ended here! But the ill effects on others may be multiplied a thousand-fold. By a single act, we may put a force in motion, the evil consequences of which may be recognisable as long as eternity shall last. How often should we pray that grace may so illuminate our souls, that our life may be as a *shining light, going forward and increasing ever to perfect day: God being glorified thereby.*

COLLOQUY.

O Light of the world, enlighten Thou me! and enable me by the illuminating power of Thy grace to attract others into the path of justice. *He was a burning and a shining light,* Thou, O Lord, didst say of Thy Precursor. Let me not forget that Thou hast laid this injunction upon me: *Let your light shine.* May I too bear witness of Thee before the world; and by affording an example of edification, make the virtues in which Thou delightest, to be admired, and their practise adopted, as far as I am able.

RESOLUTION.

Not to fail so often to give a good example.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in Heaven.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Fourteenth Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

The Mission of Jesus still continued in His Church.

All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made that was made.—S. JOHN I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves that as *nothing was made without the Word*, so His work on earth is still going on, and nothing is done without His aid.

II. PRELUDE.

O Divine Author and Finisher of all things, may we assist Thee to carry on Thy work on earth, remembering that *without Thee we can do nothing*.

I. POINT.

The active Life of Jesus on earth is still continued.

Nothing could exceed the humility and lowliness of Jesus Christ during the thirty-three years of His Life amongst men. *Verily Thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Saviour.* They looked for a Deliverer, all-powerful and triumphant, and behold One, Who comes on earth to suffer—to labour—to be despised; they discover no tokens of royal birth: His surroundings are those of poverty. In His earlier years He was utterly unknown: during His public Ministry, He was looked upon as the

Carpenter's Son. His astonishing miracles, His divine eloquence, His unequalled sanctity were alike unavailing to produce an impression on His opponents ; and He saw but little fruit of all His labours. Then followed the opprobrium of the Passion—the humiliation of the Tomb. A few disciples—in some of whom faith was wavering, in others entirely shattered—such was the success of a career, consecrated to the ameliorating of the miseries of the human race. Was this then the end of the grand Mission which the Heavenly Father confided to His Son ? No, it was but the beginning ! Unless beginnings are marked with the Cross they fail to bring forth good and lasting results. Our Saviour came to plant His Church, which like a mystic tree should cover the earth with its branches. We know that it has produced much fruit, still ever increasing in abundance as the day of final triumph approaches ; but if we look back we find the beginning of this mission of evangelisation shrouded in mysterious poverty and silence, within the House of Nazareth : while the first, apparently insignificant results of Jesus' work on earth, if recognised at all, appeared to unbelieving hearts to be lost in the darkness of the Sepulchre.

II. POINT.

If we are faithful children of the Church, we are carrying on the mission Jesus began on earth.

Saint Peter, by one discourse, converted five thousand Jews to the Christian faith. Rome listened to his teaching, and many believed ! Each one of the Apostles conquered nations ; bringing them into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Saint Paul, who counted himself not worthy to be called an Apostle, *laboured even more abundantly than they all*. And in later times do we not find Saint Augustine

of England, Saint Francis Xavier, and many others full of apostolic zeal, by their individual exertions converting vast multitudes in every quarter of the world *from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God*. Yes! these Confessors have carried on the work commenced by the despised Nazarene, Whose Mission in the eyes of the world seemed a complete failure. But *the foolishness of God is wiser than men : and the weakness of God is stronger than men*. And still Jesus chooses those who are exercised in humility, and fear not shame and contempt, to perform those greater works which He Himself declared would out-do His own. He replenishes them with His grace—acts in them, and by them. Having deputed them to be His delegates, souls are converted through their ministry, and Heaven is peopled. But it is not only the Priests of His Church who are charged to carry on the Mission of Jesus. Whilst we thank Him for confiding the perfecting of His work chiefly to them, none must be wholly inactive in the Lord's Vineyard. There is something for the last and the least to do, and it behoves each one to see what he is doing—and if he is doing it well.

COLLOQUY.

I fear indeed that I can do little, O Jesus, for Thee; but great is my desire to fulfil the task Thou hast allotted me. *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?* Shew me more clearly in what way I may help forward Thy interests, and carry on the work Thou didst come on earth to begin. It will be accomplished only, when the number of the elect shall be complete. There is still much to be done: Thou expectest each one to labour for the advancement of Thy Church. Help me so to discharge the duties laid upon me, that I may one day hear Thee say: *Well done, good and faithful servant*.

RESOLUTION.

To question myself often as to whether I am labouring together with Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

We are God's coadjutors.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Fourteenth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

Prudence and courage are necessary to the obtaining of salvation.

Blessed is he that shall not be scandalised in Me: The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away.—S. MATT. XI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us hear our Divine Lord pronouncing those words, with reference to the inquiry made by Saint John-the-Baptist's disciples, as to whether He were the Christ or no.

II. PRELUDE.

We beseech Thee, O God, to replenish our souls with ardent zeal for our sanctification; so that we may courageously overcome the obstacles thereto, which present themselves.

I. POINT.

We must take care that the very goodness of Jesus be not to us a cause of condemnation.

The Son of God, sensible of the terrible ravages which the sin of Adam had caused amongst the race of mankind, came to live on earth with us, to shew us after what manner virtue should oppose itself to vice. He taught a heavenly doctrine, which was capable of counteracting the pernicious effects of all the false teaching which then, as now, was leading astray such multitudes of souls. He offers His grace, which enables all who accept it to triumph over the corruption of human nature. But the greater part of mankind having deliberately chosen darkness rather than light, reject the salvation which Jesus came from Heaven to bring. Instead of receiving His gift of eternal life, how many are offended; despise both the gift and the Giver, and seal their own condemnation by a refusal of God's mercy. Therefore our Lord said : *Blessed is he that shall not be scandalised in Me.* They who make Him a cause of scandal, though their very ingratitude become worse; and their destruction is inevitable, if they persist in putting Jesus in the wrong, and maintaining a preference for that which is inimical to Him and His cause. . . . We need not look outside ourselves, and meditate upon the wickedness of those who openly reject Jesus and His doctrine; it is more profitable to examine the details of our own conduct. Is our life, with its daily actions, in accordance with the manifestation of God's Will in our regard? How innumerable are the benefits we have received from Him! Is there a true proportion between our sanctity and the graces bestowed on us? He asks of us a pure heart, disengaged from all attachment to the world; a willingness to follow

the law of charity He has framed. Are we ever tempted to be ashamed of confessing that we belong to Jesus? of openly taking His part in the face of contempt and ridicule? *Blessed is he that shall not be scandalised in Me.*

II. POINT.

Heaven is won by assault.

While on the one hand we are told that to such as reject Jesus for the world, He will prove *that stone of stumbling and rock of scandal*, which will eventually fall upon and destroy them, on the other we are reminded that His adherents must be prepared to follow their King into many a battle-field, to endure the consequences of the scandal of His ensign—the Cross: but then a glorious victory is assured them; Heaven is to be won by the assailants of the enemies of God. What soldier however would fear to fight, if he were perfectly certain of overcoming his adversary? The violent, that is, the undaunted—the courageous, bear Heaven away as their prize. Our Lord tells us this, and yet self-love is often vainly seeking to interpret His words otherwise. All the elect have suffered—resisted temptations—done violence to their own natural inclinations, in order to be practised in virtue, and to attain perfection. Why not silence the cowardly excuses of self-pity, and be more resolute in combating every foe? more determined never to put aside our arms until, after the last struggle, we lay them down for ever at the Feet of the Son of Mary?—in all things *having overcome, because of Him that hath loved us.*

COLLOQUY.

O my Saviour, how good hast Thou been in thus coming

to the succour of human-kind, to raise it up; ennobling it by imparting to it the power of imitating Thine own virtues, and participating in Thy merits. Great is the debt of gratitude I owe Thee! May I never fail to repay Thy goodness as far as I can, by corresponding faithfully to Thy purposes concerning me. Help me to wage a perpetual warfare with Thine enemies and mine; to follow wherever the Cross may lead; and in the might of Thy power maintain a constant strife with my pride and self-love. Shall I surely win the victor's palm?—*He is faithful that hath promised.*

RESOLUTION.

To be more courageous in combating my natural inclinations.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Labour as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Fourteenth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

Jesus blessing the little children.

Little children were brought to JESUS that He might touch them: And the disciples rebuked them that brought them: Whom when Jesus saw, He was much displeased and saith to them: Suffer the little children to come to Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God: And embracing them, and laying His Hands upon them, He blessed them.—
S. MARK X.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus as He laid His Hands upon the little children who were brought to receive His blessing.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Lord, that we not only shew love and tenderness to little children, for Thy Sake, but also strive to imitate their simplicity and humility.

I. POINT.

Suffer the little children to come to Me.

Why, it may be asked, did Jesus take pleasure in seeing these little creatures around Him? why manifest such readiness to pay attention to the request of their parents? The pure and simple heart of a little child, the beauty of an innocent soul, captivates the love of the Creator. It is seldom related that Jesus shewed displeasure towards His Disciples, but on this occasion He evidently wishes it to be well observed that, far from approving of their over-strained notion that children were out-of-place in their Master's presence, it is His express desire that they should be brought to Him, taught to know Him early, and to love Him. How beautiful in little children is their simple familiarity with Jesus! The value He puts upon their affection and confidence towards Himself, is evidenced by the severity with which He denounces any who may say or do aught, to lessen the faith of one of His little ones; or be the cause of their offending Him. *It were better for such a one that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea.* So dear to the Heart of

Jesus is the soul whose baptismal garb of innocence is yet untarnished ! How careful we should be to protect the hearts and minds of the young from all that might undo the effects of their Angel-guardian's watchful solicitude, and cause God to hide His Face : *His Eyes are too pure to behold evil.* What if the first turning away of the Heavenly Father's Face from any child should be traceable to some word or act of ours ! Let us take heed that *we despise not one of His little ones, for it is His Will that not one of them should perish.*

II. POINT.

Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven..

Jesus has sanctified childhood in an especial way by the choice He made of its condition of dependence : hereby He teaches us that humility and obedience should be practised by us, in a marked manner. During His holy Childhood, throughout His Life, He proved Himself entirely duteous and submissive to His blessed Mother ; and still He owns the sway of her maternal influence :—Jesus re-entered Heaven as the Son of Mary. How far are we conforming ourselves to the example Jesus has given us ? We can look at His representatives, the very least of His brethren—the artless—the guileless—the humble—the pure—the submissive—the childlike—those who are little in their own eyes ; and ask ourselves if we resemble them. The worldly wise, the proud, the self-important, disdain the very thought of becoming like little children : it is irreconcilable with their worship of riches, of intellect, of self.—It perhaps might be argued that Saint Paul said : *he had put away the things of*

a child. True, but let us remember how admirably he balances the Christian characteristics of prudence and wisdom on the one side, with simplicity and submissiveness on the other : *Brethren, do not become children in sense, but in malice be children, and in sense perfect.* Let us mingle with the little children who pressed around our Lord, and if we have their simple faith and guilelessness, He will also give us His blessing.

COLLOQUY.

Make me, O Holy Child of Mary, to share in Thy tender regard for little children. May I observe in them the characteristics that thou desirest to see in me, and by Thy grace be converted and become like them in all those virtues which are pre-eminently childlike. Increase in me especially, simple faith ; that I may hold familiar converse with Thee. Make me very careful lest I ever cause one of Thy little ones to offend Thee, but whenever I am able, let me teach them some new way of loving Thee better.

RESOLUTION.

To be more childlike, that Jesus may bless me also.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Suffer the little children to come unto Me : for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

PRAYER.

Our Father and Hail Mary.

Fifteenth Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

The Widow of Nain.

JESUS went into a city called Nain : And when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother ; and she was a widow : Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy towards her, He said to her : Weep not : And He came near and touched the bier : And they that carried it stood still : And He said : Young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And He gave him to his mother.—S. LUKE VII.

I. PRELUDE.

We picture to ourselves the procession of mourners accompanying the corpse of the young man to his grave. The mother walks beside the bier : Jesus draws near to perform a miracle, and to comfort her.

II. PRELUDE.

Divine Jesus, full of compassion towards Thy creatures, make us to understand the goodness of Thy Sacred Heart, and inspire us with love, and confidence in Thee.

I. POINT.

Jesus can raise us to a life of holiness.

We perceive in the dead son of the widow of Nain a figure of a soul that is dead in offences and sins—wrapped

about with the winding-sheet of evil passions. The life of grace is extinct, there is no movement of the soul towards God, no activity in His service. For Him there is no thought—no desire. True friends, in charity are weeping, as they see the sad effects of this spiritual death. Jesus permits them to carry this soul, in its inertness, along the way by which He will pass ; and where He will speak to it. They may have been praying long for that poor soul, they think all help is gone ; and then Jesus makes His power to be known, and performs a miracle of grace. How many owe their return to spiritual life to the compassionate goodness of Jesus ; He has quickened their souls and restored them to the loving care of our holy Mother, the Church, who has mourned over the loss of so many. How does She rejoice when, obedient to the love-inspired command of Her Divine Lord—*I say to thee, arise*—a soul casts off the shroud which the passions have woven, and in which it has been enveloped by evil inclinations. Awakening to newness of life, how should every power be devoted henceforth to the service of Him, Who has by His word wrought deliverance from death and hell. Let us thank our dear Saviour, for His mercy towards ourselves, and others thus rescued.

II. POINT.

How sorrow and suffering draw forth the compassion of Jesus.

Let us turn our attention to the grief-stricken widow of Nain, and we shall see how great is the mercy of our Saviour. *Thou, O Lord, art a God, full of compassion.* How often may we not all say with the Psalmist: *O Lord, Thou hast helped me and comforted me.* The poor widow is repre-

sented as having lost all she loved on earth, and Jesus says to her : *Weep not*, and His words herald relief. At times we too may seem bereft indeed, and hope lies crushed beneath a weight of sorrow. We trust in God—we do not wish to repine ; but all looks so dark for the future. We forget perhaps that we are really not alone, so overpowering is our sense of loneliness—and we weep. This is the moment when Jesus, seeing how much we are in need of His immediate help, draws near, and says to us : *Weep not*. And then (surely we know it well) He does not go away without giving sensible comfort to our hearts. He stays near us—we feel the sympathy of His Own Heart, and that His love has found out a way to alleviate our grief. He will try one means or another—giving us to understand why there is no need for us longer to weep. He can supply the place [of whatever we have lost, should He not see fit to restore it. How full of comfort to a faithful soul are the consolations of Jesus. *Weep not*, He says ; it is I, Myself, Who sent you this trial for your good—to prove your faith, your patience, your fidelity : suffering is needful to purify your soul, to withdraw you from the world, to attract you to My service : I desire to give you opportunities of increasing your merits. Though I deprive you of all things which have claimed your affections, I will never deprive you of Myself and of My love. . . . Does not this assurance suffice ?

COLLOQUY.

The consideration of the miracle performed by Thee, O Jesus, at the gate of the city of Nain, and of the manifestation there of Thy power to console the afflicted, brings back to my mind many instances of Thy mercy and compassion towards me, Thy unworthy child. In order to

contemplate them, I place Thy power and Thy goodness side by side: I thank Thee for having awakened in my soul the life of divine love, and I beseech Thee ever to draw near to help and comfort me in the time of trial and affliction. And hereafter *lift me up from the gates of death, that I may declare all Thy praises throughout eternity.*

RESOLUTION.

To rely on Jesus alone for consolation.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He hath delivered my soul from death: my eyes from tears: I will please the Lord in the land of the living.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Fifteenth Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

Parable of the barren Fig Tree.

A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit on it and found none; And he said to the dresser of the vineyard: Behold for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down therefore; why cumbereth it the ground? But he answering said to him; Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it, and dung it; And if happily it bear fruit: but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.—

S. LUKE XIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves how the owner of the vineyard came from time to time, to see if this fig-tree had begun to bear fruit ; giving orders at length that it should be cut down.

II. PRELUDE.

Preserve us, O Lord, from the punishments reserved for those who bring forth no fruit unto holiness.

I. POINT.

God expects that we should produce the fruits of good works.

From the parable of the fig-tree, we are to understand that we have been planted by God within His Vineyard—that is to say, His Church. If we are called to the religious life, we receive special culture at His Hand ; and are expected to repay His care in training our souls, by yielding more abundant fruit. Innumerable graces are showered upon us, we are watched over and tended : does He find in us those proofs of zeal and devotedness in His service which He has every right to expect ? Our Adorable Master will not suffer barren trees to remain in the choice garden of Religion. He forewarns us of His visits ; let us not forget that if we disappoint His expectations He may say : *I have come often seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none : Cut it down therefore : why cumbereth it the ground ?* Is not this menace enough to re-awaken the tepid soul from a state of lethargy and unconcern ? Jesus speaks of the rigour of His most just judgments in order to make us strive

to avoid them ; it is for us to profit by the severe yet kindly warning. . . . Deeply rooted should we be in humility—strongly supported by good resolutions, so that we may stoutly resist the storms of human passions and satanic temptations. The blighting effects of sin must be removed by the cleansing process of penance : the dew of God's grace, and the showers of His benediction will be attracted by our grateful endeavours to glorify Him.

II. POINT.

Chastisement is reserved for sterile souls.

Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground ? Oh, terrible sentence ! are we incurring it now ? What fruits have we produced, since we came into the world ? let us examine our lives and see. What good have we actually done ? For whom have we put forth our strength ? After what manner have we obeyed God's laws ? If we have been admitted amongst those on whom His most abundant graces are being poured, of what an injustice are we not rendering ourselves guilty, if we fail to accomplish the purpose which we were intended to fulfil. We cannot thwart God's designs with impunity. Have we not reason to thank Him for His patience with us, in that He has not yet said : *Cut it down ?* for His mercy, in that He has listened to those who plead for us with Him ? to those who knowing our spiritual defects, pray for, and perseveringly help us to amend ? Thanks be to our good Lord, we are yet upon our trial ! *Now is the acceptable time—now is the day of salvation.* We are still surrounded by all the means of sanctification : not cut off, to wither—to die—to be cast into the fire. May we avert such a doom by drawing down the invigorating graces of

the Holy Spirit ; through Whom we may assuredly bring forth fruit unto life everlasting.

COLLOQUY.

O God, it is very right that Thou shouldst receive the fruits of those graces and benedictions, which Thou hast so plenteously shed forth in my soul. I have deserved indeed to receive Thy sentence of condemnation, for Thou hast asked of me more than I have given Thee : I have often failed in the fulfilment of Thy designs. In mercy help me to profit better by all the means Thou hast placed at my disposal, to become more pleasing in Thy sight, more worthy of a place in the well-watered garden of the Lord. May Thy grace henceforth fructify more abundantly in me, so, that I may bring forth good works to Thy honour and glory.

RESOLUTION.

In future to let no day pass without its offering to God of *the fruit of good works.*

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Let it alone this year also.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fifteenth Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

The Love of God and of our Neighbour.

One came and said to JESUS : Good Master, what good shall I do that I may have life everlasting? Who said to him : Why askest thou Me concerning good? One is good, God ; But if thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments ; He saith to him : Which? And JESUS said : Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness ; Honour thy father and thy mother ; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith to Him : All these have I kept from my youth, what is yet wanting to me? Jesus saith to him : If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come, follow me ; And when the young man had heard this word, he went away sad ; for he had great possessions.—S. MATT. XIX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us observe this young man as he approaches our Lord : He converses with Him for a short time, and then turns away in sadness.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O God, that we may become more entirely detached from all earthly possessions, out of love for those which are heavenly.

I. POINT.

Attachment to created things is dangerous to the welfare of our souls.

To have a thoroughly convincing proof of this truth, we have but to consider this young man, who went to Jesus, and heard from His Lips the counsels of perfection. We may remark that there was so much in him which showed a tendency to adopt a perfect life : from his childhood he had observed the precepts of the Law with evident strictness ; he was humble and pious. Holy inspirations taught him there was something higher to which he might attain ; and this it was which led him to seek the true Master of the spiritual life, in order to learn what he would have to undertake, to acquire a more advanced degree of sanctity. But, *he had great possessions*, and this proved his stumbling-block. He was told by Jesus that if he would indeed be perfect, he must abandon his riches, place them entirely out of his reach, and follow Him in His poverty. Many there are who have spoken with Jesus on this subject : in the Sacrament of His Love they have conversed with Him, and have protested that they wish to be more entirely His. Then He has replied perhaps : If indeed thou wilt accept the evangelical counsels, with all the sacrifices they entail, I will keep thee near Myself, and will furnish thee with sufficient grace and strength to persevere in thy good desires of attaining to a perfect life here ; and a degree of glory in Heaven far surpassing that which the simple observance of the Law ensures. Has our Lord spoken thus to us ? If so, thrice-happy are we if we have accepted His most favourable conditions. If our love and confidence have been real enough to cause us to make the first great sacrifice, are we faithfully following Him wherever He desires to lead us ?

II. POINT.

It is dangerous deliberately to choose the less perfect life.

Perhaps this young man imagined that our Lord might have required him to give larger alms—to remain with Him for a while and listen to His general teaching—to give more time to his religious duties. For some such lesser sacrifices he was doubtless prepared. But when he heard that a great and life-long sacrifice was demanded of him, we are told *he went away sad*. A choice was put before him—the bare accomplishing of the duties of an ordinary life, with the constant danger of falling beneath the weight of those riches which were too dear to him—or, the fulfilling of the requirements of a privileged life, in company with Jesus, and the assurance of a treasure reserved in Heaven. And he preferred to remain where he was; he stifled his desires after truer excellence, and lost certainly the greater grace and the greater glory. Who can say how bitterly he afterwards repented his lack of courage, his want of detachment! And is not this the history of many souls? They have received special enlightenment with regard to the fact that their lives are not so perfect as they might be: they are conscious of an interior attraction towards a higher state of sanctity. But when they find that there is a greater sacrifice to make than they had imagined; that they would have to wait until the end of this life for relief—from the hardness of poverty—from the dreaded mortification of the senses—and from the pain of separation from home and kindred, it seems too great an undertaking. Jesus does not offer His most precious gifts to all; He says to the majority of Christians: *If you will enter into life, keep the command-*

ments. On some, however, He confers the unspeakable privilege of hearing the whisper of His love: *If you would be perfect, forsake all and follow me*: should these imitate the young man in the Gospel they too must needs be sad. They will be troubled, and not without cause. We may not run in advance of God's grace—still less may we linger behind it.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus—Spouse of my soul—I thank Thee for those first holy inspirations which made me understand that I must not be content to retain possession of earthly goods, and friends, and pleasures; but must relinquish all these for Thy Sake, because Thou hadst from all eternity decreed that Thou wouldst offer me in exchange poverty, and solitude, and mortification, together with the assurance of unending happiness and imperishable riches, when this little term of life shall be over. Keep me only near Thee, lest I lose sight of Thee. If left to myself, I could do nothing,—but I know Thy grace, O my God, will be sufficient for me, however difficult my chosen path may prove.

RESOLUTION.

To seek to become more and more perfect.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

If thou wilt be perfect, come and follow Me.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Fifteenth Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

We should seek the last place.

JESUS saith to His Disciples: You know that they who seem to rule over the Gentiles, lord it over them: and their princes have power over them: But it is not so among you: but whosoever will be greater, shall be your minister: And whosoever will be first among you, shall be the servant of all. For the Son of Man also is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many.—

S. MARK X.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us listen to our Lord, as He teaches His Disciples that the first among them should be the servant of all.

II. PRELUDE.

O Adorable Saviour, may we follow herein Thy example; and seek not to govern, but to serve.

I. POINT.

Jesus came on earth not to exact the homage of men as a King, but to effect their salvation.

The Son of God possessed in Heaven equal glory with the Father; and the Angels bowed down with reverence before His hidden Majesty, when He deigned to appear on earth, clothed in human Flesh. In this condition of self-

abasement, He did not cease to be worthy of the adoration of every creature, and He might have claimed this from all mankind. Nevertheless He did not do so: instead of taking, in the midst of them, the high rank due to Him, He humbled Himself so far as to be in subjection to them all His Life. This was the use the King of Heaven and earth made of His divine power—He exercised it in hiding His supreme Majesty. In like manner He taught His Disciples how to use the authority He gave them: *The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*; and you, who are My Disciples, whom I shall establish to be the leaders of a holy generation, princes in My Church, must be the servants of all, and sacrifice yourselves for the benefit of others. And this same spirit our Dear Master desires to see in us all. We must be on our guard against the spirit of domineering, and if we would distinguish ourselves, let it be by the spirit of humility—instinctively taking our place as the last; serving others, by sacrificing ourselves in order to edify and instruct; and by ministering to their necessities both of body and soul. Do we not, on the contrary, consider that we demean ourselves if we stoop to serve? Do we not fear to lower ourselves, even in our own eyes? And yet surely we know, or ought to know, our own littleness!

II. POINT.

Those in a position of authority must carefully make use of it, to promote the good of others.

Whosoever will be first among you, shall be the servant of all. It is not that they who occupy exalted positions should selfishly enjoy their pre-eminence, and proudly glory in being the object of the regard and attention of inferiors, that

they are called upon by God to govern and direct. We should never forget that influence and power form a grave responsibility. If obliged to exercise them, our conduct will be necessarily scrutinised: and what if it be not regulated according to the express teaching of Jesus! We cannot fail to observe His unalterable patience and meekness in relation to His Disciples. He was ever their Servant, and yet their Master; guiding them—instructing them—reprehending their defects—encouraging them in times of difficulty—always treating them with courteous consideration. He was amongst His Apostles *as a Man approved by God*, He referred to Him all the honour and glory that might accrue to Himself: *As the Father hath given Me commandment even so I do: I am in the midst of you, as He that serveth.* Can we conscientiously repeat these words of our Master—Jesus? From the first He could have communicated to them large gifts of light and grace, but the hour for this was not yet come. Not until after the Resurrection did He exercise some of those extraordinary powers, which proved how divinely illimitable, how supreme was His authority. *All power is given to Me in Heaven and in earth.*

COLLOQUY.

O Divine Example of power, exercised in humility! Replenish me with Thy Spirit, so that all love for, or desire of ruling may be banished. Rather let me seek every opportunity of serving others and using my influence not overbearingly but gently, and for the procuring of Thy greater honour. I will judge myself in this matter by seeing if I can say with all sincerity: *I seek not my own glory.* Would that I could indeed at all times say this, as Thou couldst, O Jesus.

RESOLUTION.

To think really little of myself, but much of others' virtues.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

You are my servant whom I have chosen : I am the Lord.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive,

Fifteenth Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

Parable of the hidden treasure.

The kingdom of Heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field : Which a man having found, hideth—and for joy thereof goeth, and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.—S. MATT. XIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Gathering around the Divine Master, let us hear with much attention what He tells us concerning the Kingdom of God—which is within us.

II. PRELUDE.

Discover to us, O Well-Beloved of our souls, the value of the Treasure which they possess in possessing Thee.

I. POINT.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Treasure hidden in faithful souls.

Jesus, the Spouse of faithful souls, is their most precious Treasure. Saint Jerome says that He is to be sought for in the Holy Scriptures—in the Divine Eucharist—and in the Cross. In these He is hidden, and happy are they who find Him, and make Him their own. Is this Treasure not preferable to gold and precious stones? Jesus speaks in this parable of Himself, Who is *the Wisdom of God in a mystery, a Wisdom which is hidden, Which God ordained unto our glory: For the sensual man perceiveth not these things of the Spirit of God: for it is foolishness to him. None of the princes of this world—the worldly-minded knew, nor yet know, Jesus.* They resemble the original owner of the field in which the treasure was hid. How foolish are we if, knowing where the Treasure of the love of Jesus is to be found, we pass on, and take no pains to make it our own. It is like an inexhaustible mine: life is all too short for the delightful toil of digging deeper and deeper into it, with the spiritual implements of prayer, meditation, and activity in God's service. O Adorable Gift from Heaven—ever ancient, yet ever new—wheresoever we find Thee, a holy joy must needs fill our hearts. Discover Thyself and all Thy perfections more and more to us: be Thou all our attraction and all our happiness. Hide Thou our life in Thyself, O Jesus, and may we never seek aught out of Thee? *What have I in Heaven, besides Thee what do I desire upon earth?*

II. POINT.

The Treasure in the Gospel was bought at the price of great sacrifices.

Even as a person has no right to claim a possession belonging to another until the full price of it has been given, so we find that the acquisition of the Treasure of our souls is due to the sacrifice of earthly treasures—to detachment from worldly things. To pay the full price is what the Saints have eagerly sought to do. Filled with the desire to obtain this Treasure at all costs, they have renounced the pleasures, honours, and wealth of this world—and sacrificed self on the altar of divine love : by these means to become the sure possessors of heavenly riches. They were truly rich—in their poverty ; great—in the midst of obscurity ; happy—in the constant practice of mortification. *They sold all that they had*, and with the money of self-abnegation and the spoils of self-mastery bought the field of sanctity, wherein to occupy themselves in seeking for all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden there. How can we sit with folded hands, and flatter ourselves that we are exempt from the necessity of making any sacrifices? Faith and grace are free gifts : but the kingdom of God, eternal life, and the crown of justice must be won at some cost to ourselves. And if we have made the discovery of the priceless Treasure, let us guard it well—hide it in our hearts and draw around it the veil of holy recollection. Are we really in possession of this supreme Good ?

COLLOQUY.

Thanks be to Thee, O Jesus, for having discovered to me the secrets of the kingdom of Heaven ; for I perceive that

Thy faithful ones enter into possession of it even in this life, when they find Thee, and invite Thee wholly to possess their hearts. May I despoil myself of all, in order to make an entire purchase of the priceless Treasure of Thy Love, Thy Knowledge, and Thy Wisdom.

RESOLUTION.

To be ready for any sacrifice which may be repaid by the Love of Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

I will not offer to the Lord my God holocausts free-cost.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Fifteenth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

The Widow's Mite.

JESUS sitting over against the treasury, beheld how the people cast money into the treasury, and many that were rich cast in much; And there came a certain poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing; And calling His disciples together, He saith to them: Amen, I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury; For all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living.—S. MARK XII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus as He sat in the Temple, near the treasury, observing the poor widow as she, in passing by, put into it two mites.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Lord, to make all our offerings direct to Thee, with a pure, upright, and generous intention.

I. POINT.

God sees all, and recompenses all that we do for Him.

Jesus, we are told, had placed Himself near the treasury in the Temple, and beheld those who deposited their offerings therein. Does He not still see the motives of each one who gives something into the treasury of God's service? Each deed is counted and appreciated, and will be rewarded by our Heavenly Father, Who has a perfect knowledge of all things. Not a single desire, not a thought, which accompanies any one act of virtue, escapes His notice. That sentiment of love—this feeling of compunction—those hidden works of charity in obedience to holy inspirations, may be known to God alone: they are the two mites of the poor widow, on which Jesus set a far higher value than on *the much alms cast in by the rich*. Yes! the interior acts of virtue which we may practise at every moment, although to ourselves so apparently little, and so unknown to others, are of greater worth in God's Eyes than the most attractive deeds of mere ostentatious charity or piety. These deeds often nourish self-love and self-approval; and impose upon the doers no sacrifices comparable to those which constant

watchfulness over our intentions, recollection of God's Presence, continual correspondence to His grace, and other exercises of the spiritual life, demand. It is this consideration which should make us esteem a hidden life, and the humble duties attached to it ; since it is these unobtrusive duties which (having no exterior attractiveness) incline those who practise them, to do so with the simple motive of pleasing God.

II. POINT.

The poor widow reserved nothing for herself.

God sees all that is passing in our hearts. Is it not so that we often reserve to ourselves—for some selfish end, the larger share of our time, our talents, our wealth, our strength, our powers of body and mind, although we may be appearing to give much to God, even in a direct manner ? How few there are comparatively, who give all to Him, who devote their whole being to His service ! And yet, do we not perceive from our Lord's commendation : *She hath cast in all she had, even her whole living*, how pleasing to Him is that generosity which gives all, without want of confidence in His appreciation of the pure intention ? *God knows* : that is enough. He, the Sovereign Owner of all things, stands not in need of our offerings. He can take them away from us at any moment as His right, but He graciously accepts them as free-will gifts, that we may have the merit of yielding them up to His service. Yet there is one thing which we can retain for ourselves and the world, or give to our Good God unreservedly, that is—our heart. If we may so express it, this is what God covets. It is our love which pleases Him and glorifies Him, and renders all our offerings worthy of His acceptance. It is not so much what we give, as the love

wherewith we give. To elude the artifices of the devil there is no safer plan than to accustom ourselves to do all things in order—thoughtfully—and at the right time. This method assists recollectedness, and a pure intention rises up from the well-spring of our love; and makes our lives pleasing in the sight of Him *Who knoweth the secrets of the heart.*

COLLOQUY.

Help me, O God, to regulate all my actions according to piety and prudence; and may a pure intention sanctify them all. May I often call to mind the divine discernment of Jesus, as He gave His distinct approbation rather to the poor widow, than to the donors of far larger gifts. Oh, that I may give myself and all my concerns so entirely into Thy keeping, that I may perpetually realise the truth that all I have is Thine. I desire that my heart should be in Thy possession, henceforth and for ever. Thou knowest all things, O God, and that I love Thee.

RESOLUTION.

To console myself with the thought : God knows all.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

God knows the secrets of the heart.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Fifteenth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

On spiritual conversation.

They who are instructed in the kingdom of Heaven are likened to a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old.—S. MATT. XIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us adore Jesus Christ, Who is our Example with regard to our speaking of heavenly things.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, fill us with Thy Spirit; and may our tongues contribute to Thy glory, and the edification of our neighbour.

I. POINT.

How we ought to speak of God.

Words are a true index of the good or evil inclinations of the heart. *By your words*, says our Divine Saviour, *you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.* If we love God, we shall often speak of Him. Would that in doing so, we might experience that which Saint Francis did, “who in only pronouncing the holy Name of God, felt his soul filled with sensible delight, and with his tongue tasted the sweetness of it”. We should speak of God as if it were really of God we were speaking—with a true feeling of reverence and piety: not assuming an air of self-

sufficiency, nor an authoritative tone; but with a manner subdued and controlled by a spirit of charity, of gentleness, of humility. Let us seek to imitate the Spouse in the Canticles: *Whose lips are as the dropping honey-comb, under whose tongue are honey and milk.* To do this in any degree, we must secretly beg of God that He may, while we are speaking, be pleased to bedew our souls with His grace—that it may be *the spirit of our Father which speaketh in us.* Thus our words, being in accordance with His inspirations, will have a favourable effect on those with whom we converse: it is often astonishing what a power good and holy words have, when controlled by the spirit of divine sweetness and holy prudence. The advice given on this point by Saint Ambrose is: “that we have always in our hearts and on our lips words of wisdom”. In conversing of Jesus Christ—the Word of God, Wisdom Itself—let it be He Himself Who shall speak in us. How dreary to a truly spiritual person is a conversation in which Jesus is not, as it were, allowed to take part! How insipid the language of the world, from which His very Name is excluded!

II. POINT.

If we really love Jesus Christ, we shall certainly often speak of spiritual things.

They who really love their Creator give expression to their love in three ways: speaking to God—listening to Him—talking of Him. If then we find no pleasure in speaking of Jesus, it is a manifest sign that we have little love for Him; for *out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.* As Saint Prosper remarks: “men gladly talk about that which they like; and on the other hand, take pleasure in hearing that subject alluded to, which they have

constantly in their own thoughts". *How sweet are Thy words to my palate !* exclaims the royal Psalmist, *more than honey to my mouth :* and *these words* have ever been a source of joy and happiness to the Saints on earth. In the hour of severest trial, they have found real strength and sweetest consolation in repeating *that Name which is as oil poured out.* They have upheld each others' courage by talking together of their common interest—the advancement of the cause of God, either by living or dying for Him. All other themes, however intellectual or philosophical they may be, become wearisome; these lie within certain limits: but they who are versed in the things of God are furnished with an infinite store of divine science, and *from this treasure they can bring forth things new and old.* And it is because they love as well as know the verities of the faith, and each phase of God's goodness, that their conversation is so edifying and so forcible; and that other hearts become thereby enkindled with the love of heavenly things. O Lord, fulfil Thy promise, and *put thy words in our mouths, that we may publish the memory of the abundance of Thy sweetness, and declare Thy greatness: that we may tell of Thy wondrous works, and speak of the magnificence of the glory of Thy holiness.*

COLLOQUY.

All that Thou, O Jesus, didst say when on earth, bore upon heavenly things. Teach me how to speak aright of Thee—of Thy goodness and power: let my lips honour and glorify Thee, my God. May I avoid all idle talking, and do my part in giving a tone of unaffected piety to those conversations in which I take part. Let me never be ashamed of confessing my faith in Thee: make my speech to be wise and discreet. Especially in moments when it seems difficult

to say what is right, may I quickly turn to Thee for the assistance of Thy grace, trusting in Thy words : *It shall be given you in that hour what you shall speak.*

RESOLUTION.

To shun idle discourse, and in my conversation to keep God before me.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Let the words of my mouth be such as shall please thee.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

Sixteenth Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

A Lesson on Humility.

In the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees, JESUS spoke a parable to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them : When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honourable than thou be invited by him : And he that invited thee and him, come and say to thee, Give this man place : and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place : But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place : that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to

thee : Friend, go up higher : then thou shalt have glory before them that sit at table with thee : Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled : and he that humbleth himself be exalted.—S. LUKE XIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the house of this Pharisee : Jesus is amongst the invited guests at the table.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Lord, to become truly humble, so that our piety may be edifying to our neighbour.

I. POINT.

True humility is so estimable, that it cannot fail to be appreciated.

When thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place. That humility of which our Divine Master here gives an illustration, is so entirely excellent, that even the world, notwithstanding its depravity, cannot avoid regarding it with favour. It goes so far indeed as to adopt its externals ; doing out of mere politeness that which the servants of God do from a higher motive—a motive of virtue. A truly humble person does honour to piety. But they who are not so, will scarcely be pleasing to others under *all* circumstances, however irreproachable their general conduct may be : herein lies the difference between a true and feigned humility. To the religious-minded it becomes easy to be ever humble and courteous ; to the worldly-minded it is a difficult task always to keep up an appearance, which has no solid piety on which

to rest. Christian humility is uniformly gentle, and unconsciously condescending; free from ostentation and officiousness—ready to yield to others in all things, where there is no contravention of the commands of God. If we would indeed gain hearts for Him, and promote His glory, let us practise true humility—that virtue which we have often seen to be so dear to Jesus and Mary. O most precious virtue! How is it that we so sadly neglect its culture in our souls?—especially when we consider that because of our want of it we may one day hear our Lord say: *take thou a lower place*, when the time for increasing our store will have passed away for ever.

II. POINT.

Humility, to be true, must be deeply rooted in our hearts.

Let us beseech our dear Lord to make us more clearly perceive, by the help of His grace, what means we should take in order to become truly humble. Humility must grow up out of our hearts perennially—a blossom growing from the deeply-rooted conviction of our nothingness. How can we be contented with a merely superficial politeness, which is only an apology for real lowliness of mind and heart? Jesus did not say: Learn from My exterior practice to be humble—though He might have so done, but: *Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart*. And if in our hearts we are humble in truth, all our outward conduct will bear the seal of Christ's humility. What then have we to do? Constantly to study this characteristic of the Sacred Heart—to pray to possess it—to overcome ourselves on those occasions when self-assertion and self-esteem are striving to get the upper-hand—to refer to God, with great fidelity, all glory and honour, retaining none for ourselves. The prayer of

Saint Augustine will also help us greatly, if used in all sincerity : “ Lord ! make me to know Thee, and make me to know myself”. By these various means we shall become habitually ready to take the lowest place, *in honour preventing one another*. Far from choosing the first place, self-knowledge will prevent our making any such mistake ; and the knowledge of God will increase our gratitude towards Him, for having taught us that *it is to the humble He giveth grace : and that he who humbleth himself shall be exalted*.

COLLOQUY.

O my Saviour, how attractive to me does humility appear when I see Thy love for it, and how Thou didst enforce its practice by Thy word and example. I am so far from being truly humble ! To take the lowest place—to be slighted—to allow that I am in the wrong—to yield to the wishes of an inferior—all this is hard to me. Make me to know Thee better ; Thy perfection, Thy greatness, Thy goodness ; so that the consideration of what Thou art, may cause my own nothingness to become more distinctly evident. Abase me now, O my God, if so be that at the Eternal Banquet Thou mayest bid me *go up higher*.

RESOLUTION.

To take every opportunity of practising humility.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

God resisteth the proud, but to the humble He giveth grace.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Sixteenth Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

Jesus sends His Apostles to begin their Mission.

JESUS went into His own country, and His Disciples followed Him: And He went through the villages round about teaching: And He called the Twelve, and began to send them two and two.—S. MARK VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus Christ calling the Twelve Apostles; and giving them instructions on the work of zeal He was confiding to them.

II. PRELUDE.

O Divine Master, enkindle in our hearts a desire to labour more diligently in Thy service.

I. POINT.

The extension of the evangelical mission of our Lord.

The merciful goodness of the God-Man is strikingly manifested in this passage of the Gospel narrative. He gave Himself no rest, He had traversed Judea and Galilee announcing the good tidings that *He was come to seek and to save that which was lost—that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand*. He had gone about doing good in many towns and villages, He had initiated His Apostles into the manner

of life He would have them adopt, when He should send them to extend His Mission. The result of His own personal labours did not satisfy the intense desire Jesus had, to have the Gospel preached more widely to His chosen people. His Sacred Heart was grieved, because of the multitudes *who were distressed, and lying like sheep without a shepherd.* Therefore He called together the Twelve. Can we picture to ourselves that conference? The Saviour of the world speaking with His Apostles regarding their work as Missionaries—laying down a scheme for their direction. *The harvest indeed is great,* He said, *but the labourers are few.* Jesus speaks to us also here. How great is the number of those who in these days, know as little about the kingdom of God as did the multitudes at that time, when the Incarnate Word had so lately come on earth. Thousands still are blinded by ignorance, thousands more by prejudice!—If we entered more entirely into the wishes of Jesus, should we not be more energetic in our endeavours, to stay the floods of iniquity which threaten to deluge the world; and which are due to actual want of knowledge about God, or the effects of perverted science. If our position does not permit us to preach and to teach, at least we can leave the conference Jesus held with His first Apostles—at which we have been present in spirit—resolved to pray more perseveringly *to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest,* who may faithfully accomplish His work.

II. POINT.

The powers conferred on the Apostles.

It is a truth which should be deeply impressed on every child of Holy Church, that the work of evangelisation is one

in which all may unite. But in most cases a special vocation, and the bestowal of extraordinary graces, are requisite in order to effect those prodigies of healing both of body and soul, which have proved the divine, inherent power of the Church in every age. Miracles accompany Her work, and will to the end of time, whenever and wherever God chooses to manifest by their means His presence in Her. What dignity, what sublimity there is in the address made by our Lord to the Apostles, as He charged them with their special commission: *Go and preach the kingdom of God: heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils. Freely you have received, freely give:* (a lesson of gratitude). *Take nothing for your journey, neither staff, nor scrip, nor bread, nor money, neither have two coats:* (a lesson of confidence). And then Jesus proceeds further to give them powers of jurisdiction and spiritual authority. How utterly does this charge, made by our Lord, confound the pride of human power.—By His word, twelve men, devoid of credit, and of learning, were rendered masters over the hearts and minds of the people amongst whom they were being sent: they were entrusted with authority which God only could bestow. How powerless is that power which exalts itself against Him! how potent that authority which is derived from Him! He hath chosen the foolish—the weak—the base—the contemptible things of the world to effect His grandest designs, *so that no flesh may glory in His sight.* What lessons for us all, lie in this marvellous truth!

COLLOQUY.

Let me at least be amongst *the things which are not*, that Thou, O God, deignst to call into use for Thy glory! Give me grace to avail myself of every opportunity of doing good, and lessening the evil which abounds on every side. I

pray that an abundance of zealous labourers may enter Thy harvest-field. Give me an ever-increasing reverence for the divine authority of Thy holy Church; I rejoice in the thought that Her power is derived from Thee, O Jesus, and that though the kingdoms of the earth may be removed, nought shall prevail against Her, or destroy Her bulwarks. *Thou shalt rule Her for evermore.*

RESOLUTION.

To fulfil the duties to which God has called me, in view of the triumph of the Church.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Freely you have received, freely give.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Sixteenth Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

The advice Jesus gives the Apostles in sending them out into the towns to extend His Mission.

Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and simple as doves.—
S. MATT. X.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us accept this advice as if addressed to ourselves by our Divine Lord.

II. PRELUDE.

Inspire us, O Jesus, with the spirit both of prudence and guilelessness, and shew us how to unite them, in our dealings with the world.

I. POINT.

Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves.

Jesus wills that we should be in the world, but not of it: that we look upon ourselves as His sheep, needing His care to protect us from the fury and cunning of the wolves of passion and bad example. This consideration ought, (according to His intention) to put us continually upon our guard against the dangers by which we are surrounded; so that by our perceiving the absolute necessity of acting with prudence towards man, and sincerity towards God, we may escape the evils of negligence, levity, self-reliance, and hypocrisy. And not only this, but our Lord expects us to lessen by our presence in the world the power of the enemy; and that in the face of difficulties. *The disciple is not above the Master*; and we may not be astonished if impiety, and injustice, and hatred, be awakened against us. We may meet with opposition and persecution even as we go along our ordinary path of duty; but following the example of the Lamb of God, *Who when He was reviled, did not revile; when He suffered, threatened not*, let us endure affronts; carefully preserving in ourselves the characteristics of innocence, meekness, and patience. Let us examine our conduct in this respect, and see how far by these virtues, we are counteracting the vices of fierce hate, and ungovernable pride, with which war is now waged against God and His Church.

II. POINT.

How desirable it is to unite practical wisdom with simple piety

After our Lord had warned His Disciples of the perils into which He was sending them, He gave them a maxim which should serve as a safeguard against the enmity of the world, and the endeavours of Satan to ruin their cause. *Be ye wise as serpents, and simple as doves.* The serpent having little force to repel its foe, prudently avoids an encounter which might prove too much for its strength, and calls to its assistance other powers peculiarly its own, when danger is imminent. Again—it hides its head to prevent a death-blow being aimed at it. From the precaution it uses we can learn a lesson: we should avoid our enemies' attacks by every legitimate means we have within reach. Our Lord distinctly expresses a desire, that we do not imprudently place ourselves in danger. *When they shall persecute you in this city, flee into another.* If, however, we cannot escape those who would injure us—who would even kill the body, we need not fear, since we can place our soul—which is our higher, better life—in God's keeping, hiding it safely under His protection. Never let us be so rash as to expose to any risk that which is so precious; or to incur the danger of losing it eternally. Practical wisdom is perfectly consistent with simple piety, which causes the soul to repose all its confidence in God; and while it sincerely trusts in Him, it enjoys the restful happiness of knowing that God understands and appreciates its singleness of purpose. Happy are we if *we leave the city of the world, and dwell in the rock of the hidden life: if we are like the dove that maketh*

her nest in the mouth of the hole in the highest place—the pierced Heart of Jesus.

COLLOQUY.

Teach me, at all times, O my Saviour, how to practise the virtue of prudence, that I may be thereby protected from the dangers of the world, or the malice of the devil. I know that I have nought to fear, if I am performing aright those duties into the midst of which Thou hast sent me. Give me more of the true spirit of simplicity, so that putting aside all secondary motives, I may have no other thought than that of pleasing Thee. *Within Thy Wounds hide me,* O Saviour! there may I find quiet security—a home of peaceful retreat.

RESOLUTION.

To unite sincerity of purpose with prudence.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Be ye wise as serpents, and simple as doves.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Sixteenth Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

The Apostles return to their Master, to rest awhile.

And the Apostles coming together unto Jesus, related to Him all things that they had done and taught : And He said to them : Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little.—
S. MARK VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us admire the kind thoughtfulness of Jesus for His Disciples, in proposing that after their labours in His service, they should rest a little.

II. PRELUDE.

O Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with such love towards Thee, that we may find all our happiness in being alone with Thee.

I. POINT.

The kind welcome Jesus gave the Apostles on their return from their evangelical labours.

Let us consider the joy of the Apostles as they again met around their Beloved Master. They were wearied with their journeying—their teaching and preaching ; but we can imagine how little they thought of the fatigue and hardships they had undergone, as they related to Him the happy success of their mission—the miracles they had performed, the diseases they had cured, the exorcisms they

had effected. They had undertaken all this at their Lord's command, and had during their absence been upheld by this consideration. At the end of each day's labour they had well-earned the happiness they must have experienced in recalling the acts of charity, which in the Name of Jesus they had achieved ; by the power of Which they had likewise gained victories over themselves, and over the enemies of man's salvation. These thoughts lead us to dwell upon the certainty of the happiness awaiting us at the end of our lives ; if they shall have been passed in the exercise of good works. After the toil and strife engaged in, out of obedience and love, shall be over, Jesus will welcome us into the Land of endless rest and peace with the words : *Well done good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Doubtless the Apostles had encouraged themselves and one another, during their journeyings, with the thought that Jesus would be pleased to hear of all they were doing ; would approve of this or that line of conduct, that He would listen to, and sympathise in all they would have to relate. Do we gather up the details of our daily life and converse with Jesus about them ? and tell Him of our hopes and fears and successes, as simply as the Apostles must have done ? Nothing is of too little consequence, to speak about with Him.

II. POINT.

Jesus procured rest, and a little time of retreat for His Apostles.

Our Lord, having heard the recital of the Apostles' doings, and seeing their need of repose both of body and mind, said : *Come apart into a desert place and rest a little.* How

touching the thoughtfulness of the God-Man for His companions ! how grateful to them must have been this little while of retirement ! This life is indeed a time of toil in one form or another ; and a time of rest occurs, only as an oasis in the desert-land of weariness. Jesus says to us at the end of a day's work—after a week of labour—after a month or months of incessant active service for Him—*Come apart, and rest awhile*. Short seasons of repose He offers us in the time of prayer, of Holy Communion, of sickness, of solitude, of retreat. They may only last a little while ; but what refreshment do they not afford, if Jesus accompany us as *we go apart* ; and since it is He Who invites us, we may be sure His Presence will be with us. *Come*, He says, *and rest a little*—out of the reach of the world's turmoil—its absorbing interests—its distractions, its anxieties. *Come apart into the wilderness to which I would lead thee—so that I may speak to thy heart*—that I may shew thee what My purposes of mercy are for thee—that thou *mayst rest a little* nearer Me, and learn the secrets of My love.

COLLOQUY.

How wonderful are Thy ways, O Lord ! Thy dealings with Thy children ! Thou desirest that I should be diligently engaged in Thy service, Thou permittest that I should be even exposed to the enmity of the world, that I should be harassed by the persecutors of my soul ; but Thou biddest me from time to time *rest a little* to recruit my strength, to recount to Thee my dangers and difficulties, my failures and successes. Thou, in Thy tender, loving carefulness over me, dost provide me with opportunities of reposing awhile in the calm of retreat, of contemplation, of

communion. Lead me often, O Jesus, into this divine solitude and *speaking to my heart*. Let prayer re-invigorate me, Holy Communion sustain me, and Thy Presence be the place of my rest.

RESOLUTION.

To appreciate better the opportunities God gives me of recruiting my spiritual strength.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Come apart, and rest a little.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Sixteenth Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

The fire of divine Love.

Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it. . . . JESUS said: I have come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled.—CANT. VIII. . . S. LUKE XII.

I. PRELUDE.

We listen to Jesus as He, with mystic meaning, tells us that He is come to *kindle fire on the earth*.

II. PRELUDE.

Illumine our souls, O Lord, with that fire of divine charity, which the effects of the world's cold ingratitude cannot extinguish.

I. POINT.

Jesus desires to enkindle in our hearts the fire of His love.

This well-chosen metaphor conveys to the mind the ardour of the desire Jesus experienced, to awaken in the hearts of men the strong principle of charity—irresistible in its divine potency. He says once more : *Let there be light*—light emanating from Himself, the Sun of Justice, to illuminate, to invigorate, to inflame our souls with celestial love. God is charity : God came from Heaven to *enlighten every man that cometh into this world*. Jesus left the Throne of His glory, appeared amongst us in all the attractiveness of the perfections of the Sacred Humanity—Beautiful above the sons of men. In His charity towards us, He sacrificed His Life—nor was this all ! He abides with us still under the Eucharistic Veils—because of His love for souls ! And why ?—because God had so loved us ! Is the fire that Jesus *cast upon the earth* affecting our lives ? Can there be any apprehension that the ardour of our first love may die out ? True charity cannot be quenched in faithful hearts : adversities, persecutions, temptations, all tribulations—whether from within or from without—serve to feed the flame and make it rise to Heaven, consuming our daily sacrifices of self-love and self-will, on the altar of pure affection. This is the continual holocaust which we may offer for a most sweet odour of a sacrifice by fire to the Lord.

II. POINT.

Many souls actually hinder Jesus from enlightening them.

Knowing that our Lord, the Light of light, wills to illumine our souls with the warm beams of His grace, let us ask ourselves whether we are accepting or impeding (if not repelling entirely) the advances of His charity. From the Holy Tabernacle His love yet shines forth; thence we regain what we may have lost of ardour in His service. The warmth of our zeal may have abated: we may have placed some obstacle between our souls and the divine influence of that Sacred Fire, which having been cast upon the earth will, until the consummation of all things, burn upon our Altars; but should we find this to be the case, we must seek to remove the refractive medium interposed by our callousness or indifference, and re-light the flame of our heart's affection from that Flame which ever issues from the Loving Heart of Jesus. Can we not render Him love for Love? Are we so cold—so ungrateful, as to care little whether we really possess an ardent, active, responsive love for God or not? *Have we not known and believed the charity, which God hath to us? and that he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him?* It behoves us to pray to the Holy Spirit, that He would discover to us what it is that retards the increase of our love for heavenly things,—why it remains thus dormant, instead of mounting up continually towards God. Love of Jesus, Divine Fire! burn thou yet more clearly in our hearts, so that our lives being illumined thereby, may emit bright rays of sanctity in the midst of a world *where iniquity abounds, and where the charity of many, alas! grows cold.* Blessed are they who possess a love strong as death, and inextinguishable.

COLLOQUY.

O Love, which Jesus came on earth to enkindle, burn within my heart unceasingly ; enlighten my mind, and make my life to be a perpetual holocaust, acceptable to the Heavenly Father. May my love be true and ardent : and though *the waters of affliction come in even unto my soul*, may it prove unquenchable. Increase in me a greater devotion to Thy Divine Heart, O Jesus, the Source of that pure flame of divine love which is the joy of the Saints.

RESOLUTION.

Often to ask Jesus to increase the fire of divine love in my heart.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

I am come to cast fire on the earth.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Sixteenth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

The parable of the rich man.

The rich man said : Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink, and make good cheer. But God said to him : Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee : and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ?—S. LUKE XII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us hear Jesus answering, by a similitude, one who spoke to Him concerning the claim he had to a certain property.

II. PRELUDE.

O God, give us grace to remember that our highest good is to possess Thee.

I. POINT.

Religious persons ought not to be too much occupied with temporal affairs.

Our Adorable Master was always attentive to seize every opportunity of instructing those who followed Him. So now, to this end, He takes advantage of a certain man's proposal that he should act as arbitrator between himself and his brother, in the matter of a right he had to a share in an inheritance. After having disclaimed all power of settling this question: *Man, who hath appointed Me judge or divider over you?* hereby shewing His deference to constituted authority—Jesus Christ proceeded to speak a parable, which we should do well to consider. The owner of an estate had become exceedingly rich, because of the fertility of his land. Instead of giving God the tithes and first-fruits, and evincing any gratitude towards Him, he thought only of selfishly enjoying his wealth, and resolved *to take his rest, eat—drink—and make good cheer*. What a life for one whom God has made to His own Image! for the possessor of an immortal soul! To-day he thus determines with himself: to-morrow, he is a corpse: *and whose shall those things be which he has provided?* Undue attachment to any

of those things of which we have the temporary use, will inevitably cause disquietude, trouble, and remorse, at some time or other. We shall lose thereby true peace, and the love of God. Earthly possessions, of whatever kind—riches, power, talents, can never of themselves procure real and solid happiness ; and what misery may they not entail if used only for selfish ends ? If one does not place them at God's disposal, has He not a perfect right to remove His dishonest agent ?

II. POINT.

In God alone is solid wealth found.

If, of persons in general, half the number were as much pre-occupied with the thoughts of heavenly wealth as the remainder are with those of earthly gain, how many more truly faithful servants might God count upon ! Sad is the reflection that the majority *lay up treasure for themselves, and are not rich towards God*. Are we seeking to increase our heavenly store—of merits ? using the talents entrusted to us to the highest advantage. We cannot plead we do not know our Lord's will, since He has said : *Trade till I come*—become rich towards God. By giving our all into the treasury of Heaven, we have, during our sojourn on earth, every real want supplied, *without money and without price*. If we are in necessity—Jesus is our Helper ; if we are suffering—He is our Consoler : if we are sick—He is our Physician ; if we hunger—He is our Nourishment ; if we die—He is the Source of Life. Is it not in Him alone that solid wealth is found ? What are we really living for ? Is it that we may take our ease ? eat and drink ? and spend the remainder of this short life in worldly enjoyments, up to the

moment when God shall say : *This night is thy soul required of thee !* Or, can we say by blessed experience : Oh, how desirable is the possession of God ! how advantageous is the religious life in which all that is perishable is forsaken for the Imperishable !

COLLOQUY.

O happy exchange ! If I give all I have, and all I am to Thee, my Well-Beloved, Thou givest in return an inheritance of which death does not deprive me, but of which it puts me in possession. How deplorable would it be, if I were to make a selfish use of the *plenty of fruits* Thou hast entrusted me with, to turn to good account. Preserve me from the condemnation of one *who layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards Thee, O God.*

RESOLUTION.

To be more detached from all mere worldly interests.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Whose shall those things be that thou hast provided ?

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Sixteenth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

On Fraternal Correction.

If thy brother shall offend thee, go, and rebuke him between thee and him alone : If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother.—S. MATT. XVIII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us adore Jesus Christ : He is teaching His disciples after what manner they are to warn each other of their faults.

II. PRELUDE.

Thou willest, O Lord, that we should mutually aid one another in the work of our sanctification : give us that true charity which is so necessary in the performance of this duty.

I. POINT.

Our Lord imposes on us the obligation to warn our neighbour of his faults.

This is often a thankless office—a duty most Christian, but frequently difficult—but it is one from which we ought not to shrink, for Jesus Christ lays down this law of charity : *If thy brother sin against thee, rebuke him ; and if he do penance, forgive him.* Cowardice, indifference, or timidity cannot serve as a pretext for dispensing ourselves from the accomplishment of this duty. Holy Scripture, and the

Fathers of the Church condemn, very rigorously, such as are not careful to acquit themselves of it. "No one," says Saint Bernard, "may flatter vice; no one may palliate it. Let no person excuse himself for not pointing out another's fault, saying: *Am I my brother's keeper?* for to be silent where we ought to reprehend vice, is to consent to it; and to run the risk of the same punishment as they do, who actually commit the sin." It is incumbent upon us to weigh well these words, since it is to be feared that we not unfrequently share in the faults of others, by conniving at them out of human respect. We have not the courage to appear to hold a contrary opinion—to say or do differently from what others say or do. And yet it would often be sufficient to shew disapprobation by a single word, a slight gesture, or absolute silence. Where is our charity? where is our zeal for God's honour, when we fail to prevent the continuance of an outrage against it? to obviate the repetition of an offence which will draw down His wrath upon the perpetrators? Where is, in such a case, our care for our own soul? because *the conniver shall not go unpunished*. The obligation which devolves on each one of us to discountenance evil, and further, distinctly to rebuke it if necessary, is one which we may not look upon as supererogatory.

II. POINT.

On the manner of rebuking others.

Jesus said: *Rebuke thy brother between him and thee alone*. These words presuppose reflection, and self-control. A secret admonition is the first step to be taken, where it is necessary to reprehend another's failings. It is to be made in such a way as to spare the feelings of the delinquent;

and to prove that the rebuke proceeds from a motive of purest charity. How do we give reproof? in what spirit? And we may ask ourselves in what spirit we likewise receive fraternal correction. . . . To make us understand the serious importance of this subject our Lord goes on to say, that if our advice make no impression, we must reprove openly, *lest we incur sin*; and that as a last resource in case of great scandal, the authority of the Church must be appealed to. But our ordinary duty in this matter is to be careful lest under the shadow of our indifference, wrong may grow up and develop itself. These simple rules may help us:—in admonishing, charity is to be our motive; our manner should be gentle—our words well-chosen—our voice calm and persuasive. We must be on our guard against precipitation—waiting for a favourable moment; and against indiscretion, since charity is patient and prudent. *How much better is it to reprove than to be angry*, says the Wise Man: *Reprove a friend—if he did it, that he may not do it again: Reprove thy neighbour—if he hath said it, that he may not say it again.* Let us then admonish and receive admonition with mutual charity; encouraging one another *to go on unto perfection.*

COLLOQUY.

O Divine Master, Thou alone canst change and convert the heart; but Thou hast bidden us to tell one another of our faults. Make me thankful to any who may be so charitable as to point out to me my failings; being ever ready to receive reproof with humility, and the intention to amend. And on the other hand may I never, through indifference or human respect, permit the repetition of an offence against Thee; if by my advice or persuasion I am able to

prevent it. Give me grace to know how to rebuke with patience, prudence, and true charity ; even as Thou Thyself, O Jesus, hast given me an example.

RESOLUTION.

To help others not to offend God ; and to receive admonition myself gratefully.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Admonish thy friend, for there is often a fault committed.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Seventeenth Week after Pentecost.—Sunday.

The great Precept of Charity.

A doctor of the law, asked Jesus, tempting Him : Master, which is the great commandment in the law ? JESUS said to him : Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—
S. MATT. XXII.

I. PRELUDE.

We represent to ourselves the temple in Jerusalem : there we see our Lord speaking in presence of His Disciples, of the Pharisees, and the Sadducees.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace to love Thee as perfectly as we are able ; and to love our neighbour as ourselves, for love of Thee.

I. POINT.

We ought to love God with all our heart.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. All our being should be consecrated to the love of Him who has conferred life upon us. This love is the end of our creation—during this life it is the cause of merit—after death it will be our recompense. Our hearts are made to be attached to God : in Him is their only true happiness ; if they search for this elsewhere, they will never find it. What could be greater, what more elevating, and at the same time what more delightful, than to have our best affections called forth by, and fixed upon a Being, infinitely perfect—infininitely glorious?—our God ? “How is it, Lord,” cried out Saint Augustine in a transport of joyous wonder, “that Thou commandest me to love Thee ? would it not be a great honour didst Thou merely permit me to do so ? Thou dost threaten me with much misery if I do not love Thee. Ah ! my God, is it not the greatest of all miseries not to love Thee ? I do love Thee, O Beauty, ever ancient, ever new ; too late, alas ! did I begin to love Thee, and now would that I could love

Thee as I ought.” Do not these words find an echo in our hearts? Do we not ardently long to love God more? Augment Thy holy love, O God, of our undying life, within our souls; and give us grace to fulfil, in all its comprehensiveness, the greatest and first commandment.

II. POINT.

We must love our neighbour as ourselves.

The second commandment is like unto the first : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. This latter part of the great law of charity is essentially united to the former : for we cannot really love God unless we love our neighbour. *For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, Whom he seeth not ?* Saint Paul, that perfect imitator of Jesus Christ, *became all things to all men for the Gospel's sake that he might save all.* Not only did he shew his love for his neighbour in a general manner, but in his love for each *he made himself the servant of all, that he might gain the more.* Is it thus that we act in the exercise of Christ-like charity, towards the weak, the poor, the afflicted, the ignorant? making ourselves the servants of all? Is there that ready sympathy in us, which inclines a truly loving heart to *rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep?* Do we *that are stronger bear the infirmities of the weak, and seek to please one another unto good, to edification?* Such is true neighbourly charity! And how pleasant, how easy ought it to be to accomplish its precepts; for our Lord encourages us by saying that He counts all we do for others—His brethren—as done to Himself. What higher motive could we have? If we did but recollect it always, all difficulties in the way of practising perfect charity would inevi-

tably vanish. How could we then hesitate for one moment to pardon heartily ? to bear defects ? to render any service however disagreeable to nature ? Only too happy ought we to consider ourselves, if we could accept any mortification or humiliation which might witness to the genuineness of our love towards God and man.

COLLOQUY.

O Divine Legislator, Who, in Thy Temple, didst lay down Thy law of grace and love, I thank Thee that Thou didst come to confirm and perfect the sublime precept of charity. Teach me how to excel in it, that I may make ample amends for having transgressed it so frequently. Thou hast for me sacrificed Thy Life, and what have I done to prove my gratitude ? my willingness to devote myself to the service of others, out of love for thee ? Thou knowest that I desire to love thee with a strong and generous love, and my neighbour in Thee, O God. Fulfil this my desire, I beseech Thee. Remind me often of Thy words : *This do and thou shalt live.*

RESOLUTION.

To bear for love of God the defects of others.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

On these two commandments of love dependeth the whole law of God.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Seventeenth Week after Pentecost.—Monday.

The precept of Self-renunciation.

JESUS said: If any man will follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me: For whosoever will lose his life, for My sake and the Gospel, will save it.—
S. MARK VII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us pay great attention to what our Lord tells us—His disciples, about the necessity of taking up our cross.

II. PRELUDE.

Fill our minds, O Lord, with lively faith, so that we may understand and desire the advantages of a life of self-abnegation.

I. POINT.

The first condition we must undertake in the following of Jesus :—we must practise self-denial.

Jesus was foreseeing His Cross and ours as He said these words : *Take up thy cross and follow Me.* He had already predicted His Sufferings, and announced to His Apostles that His Life would be sacrificed for the salvation of the world. Now He represents to them that *it is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master—and the servant as his Lord.* Are we not content that so it should be? that this word be fulfilled in us? If therefore, any one will be truly Christ's, he must practise self-denial, even as He did. God

desires that all men should be saved, but He will not compel any to enter His Kingdom: *If any man will*. After having made known His Will, and that the choice of following it or not is left to us, He indicates the first condition which it is absolutely necessary to fulfil, if we would participate in the blessings of redemption. We must renounce self, and all that may be an obstacle to that participation: our will, our judgment, our unruly inclinations. We shall be called upon to mortify our senses, to subdue our passions, to permit grace to vanquish self-love: in a word, we must refuse to follow the impulses of nature, and be guided by the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. Such is the self-abnegation demanded by Jesus: we need not be alarmed at the apparent difficulty of bearing the cross along the way He traces out, for they who walk in it with courage and confidence soon experience the truth of His assurance: *My burden is light*.

II. POINT.

The second condition to be undertaken by the disciples of Jesus:—we must endure suffering.

If any man will come after Me—let him take up his cross. Having thought of that self-denial which is so precious, so holy, so dear to the friends of the Saviour, we find that there is a second condition which is accepted by them. It is not sufficient to renounce sin, but we must embrace those virtues which come to us through the Cross. Humility—obedience—mortification, these form that spiritual cross which is the treasure of souls truly consecrated to God. We carry it in our hearts, if we have a sincere affection for humiliations and sufferings: we carry it after our Well-Beloved—gladly—imitatingly—preferably; for we would not be without it

What a source of merit and glory is this true Cross ! Are we carrying it daily ? Many persons load themselves with a false cross, one of their own fashioning. They have to endure much perhaps ; they are afflicted, humiliated, but not in union with Jesus and for His love : and it is only those *who suffer with Him now, who will be also glorified with Him hereafter*. If we know that the sword of sorrow and suffering which sacrifices our self-will and self-love, is nothing else but the love of Jesus, shall we not endure the wound it inflicts joyfully ? We have solemnly accepted the two conditions offered by our Crucified Lord—are we keeping them faithfully ? Is the obligation we have contracted of renouncing ourselves and following in the way of perfection—bearing the true Cross daily after Him—a real consolation ? a matter of deepest thankfulness ?

COLLOQUY.

I prostrate myself at Thy Feet, O Lord, and confess my unfaithfulness to my promise of leading a life of strict self-denial, and of bearing my cross with courage and constancy. How often I fall back from following Thee closely : I allow nature to exert its influence over me too much ; I shrink from humiliations ; I am still so unmortified. I beseech Thee, O Jesus, once again to accept my resolution to imitate more exactly Thy example of self-abnegation, and Thy willingness to suffer according to the Heavenly Father's Will. It is indeed my will to follow Thee.

RESOLUTION.

To impose on myself those practices of self-mortification which grace may inspire.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Seventeenth Week after Pentecost.—Tuesday.

Jesus walks upon the sea.

Having dismissed the multitude, Jesus went up into a mountain to pray: And when it was evening, He was there alone: But the boat, in which the disciples had gone before Him, being in the midst of the sea, was tossed with the waves, for the wind was contrary: And in the fourth watch of the night, He came to them, walking upon the sea. And they seeing Him walking upon the sea, were troubled, saying: It is an apparition. And they cried out for fear. And immediately JESUS spoke to them, saying: Be of good heart: it is I, fear ye not.—S. MATT. XIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the Disciples in their boat, tossed with the waves: they perceive their Master approaching them, walking on the water.

II. PRELUDE.

Convince us, O Jesus, of Thy watchful care over those who own Thee as their Lord, as we meditate upon Thy appearing to Thy Disciples when in danger.

I. POINT.

How opportunely Jesus times His visits.

After our Adorable Lord had dismissed the multitude, who desired to make Him a King, and had obliged the Disciples to go away in their boat towards the country of Genesar, He betook Himself to a mountain to escape earthly honours; to pray to His Heavenly Father. As we see Thee, O Saviour! shunning, in Thy humility, regal dignities, let us entreat Thee to make Thy throne within our hearts, and there to reign; subjecting to Thy sway all our powers of body and soul. . . . But the sweetness and restfulness of Jesus' prayer cannot obliterate from His Mind the thought, that it is out of obedience to His command that the Disciples have left Him alone: they are rowing with difficulty—are in danger—He sees their fear, so He must go to their rescue. Thus it is with tried and tempted souls: in moments of distress and of peril, they may sometimes seem to be wholly abandoned—ready to perish. Such may well take courage, as they think of Jesus on the mountain alone, and the Disciples out upon the rough waters. *His commiserations fail not*: ere long calmness will return, their trouble cease. In the way marked out by obedience we may find that difficulties arise, perhaps when we least expect them; but do we not also find that the Presence of Jesus dispels them, and that

afterwards we make more rapid progress towards the desired haven? And this, because in coming to our aid, He not only restores peace to our soul, but renews our strength and vigour for future combats; and increases our confidence in His unfailing help, in every hour of need.

II. POINT.

Jesus draws near to us in unlooked-for ways.

How little did the Disciples imagine that their Master would come to them, walking over that stormy sea: that it would soon cease its raging, and manifestly own the power of its Creator! *They were* (we are told) *troubled*, saying: *It is an apparition*. Most frequently God comes to our assistance in a way we least expect. When help does not appear under such or such a form, in accordance with some pre-conceived idea of our own, we are apt to lose courage, and exclaim impatiently, if not doubtingly: *Where is His promise—or His coming?* Past experience even, often fails to remind us that *nothing is too hard for God*: the Apostles had before seen the stormy waves laid to rest at the bidding of their Lord; but they had not thought He had means at His command, of reaching them in their present extremity. In our faithlessness do we not sometimes, as it were, tie the power of God down—limit it to a certain mode of action? and are we not loathe to admit that *it is He*, if He does not adopt our own scheme for helping us?—if He comes to our assistance *walking upon the sea*? He remembers our frailty, and will not keep us long in alarm or suspense: He will surely take the best method of giving us an assurance that it is He!—By means of sensible consolation in some form or other, He will convey to us this assurance: *Be of good heart, it is I, fear ye not*. O God,

how great, how wonderful are Thy ways ! Thy purposes, who can comprehend them ! We have so little faith ; we forget that Thy designs may be so far different from our expectations. We learn so slowly that *with God all things are possible*. Teach us, O Lord, this lesson, so that we may leave all that concerns us, both temporarily and eternally, in Thy Hands ; and glory in owning our utter dependence upon Thy bounty.

COLLOQUY.

Would that my faith in Thee, O Lord, were more constant ! I am so often anxious as to the time and manner of Thy assistance, but I beseech Thee, let me learn to trust Thee perfectly ; and with regard to the future and all its seeming uncertainties and difficulties, may I be glad to depend entirely on Thy wisdom and goodness. Thou mayst appear to me sometimes to be far away upon the mountain, and I all alone on the dark waters, toiling and weary ; and disconsolate for want of sensible help and of sympathy. Give me grace then to bear up under this trial of desolation, knowing that in Thine own best time and way, Thou wilt come to me, and say : *Be of good heart, it is I !*

RESOLUTION.

To remember that I am always in the Presence of Jesus, although He may appear to be afar off.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He came to them—walking upon the sea.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Seventeenth Week after Pentecost.—Wednesday.

Jesus bids Saint Peter walk upon the water.

Peter said : Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters. And JESUS said: Come. And Peter going down out of the boat, walked upon the water to come to JESUS. But seeing the wind strong, he was afraid: and when he began to sink, he cried out, saying: Lord, save me. And immediately JESUS stretching forth His hand took hold of him, and said to him: O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt? And when they were come up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that were in the boat came and adored Him, saying: Indeed Thou art the Son of God.—S. MATT. XIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus as He approached the boat more closely ; and Peter asking if he might walk upon the sea to meet his Master.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Lord, that as we further meditate upon the care Thou hast for Thine elect, our hearts may be replenished with greater love and confidence in Thee.

I. POINT.

The power Jesus exercises over our hearts.

When Jesus commands, we may rely on His intention to help us to obey. If He says : *Come*, will He not meet us as we go? He is the Sovereign Ruler over the waters of adversity, and the swelling tempests of this world's turmoil. *It is I*, are the words of power and consolation with which He would first re-assure us, when we have to pass across the waves of darkness and difficulty : and then He adds, to give us the merit of obedience, *Come*. In one who is desirous of being converted from a state of tepidity, negligence, or dissipation, the light of grace may as yet be feeble ; the soul may only just be able to perceive Jesus ; it is timid, and cannot clearly distinguish the outline of its new surroundings ; but it hears the Divine Voice saying : *It is I !* Saint Peter furnishes this soul's response : *Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters.* When Jesus said *Come*, he, animated with lively faith, *went down out of the boat, and walked upon the waters to go to Jesus.* Happy are they who leave the boat of self-reliance, and abandon themselves wholly to the care and love of God. He manifests His will, He indicates the means to be taken in order to accomplish it : they are not indeed the means which human prudence would point out, and worldly wisdom doubtless would absolutely condemn them ; but He Who holds troubles, and temptations, and all seeming dangers, *in the hollow of His Hand*, has said : *Come*. There is no need for hesitation—nor for delay, since He Whom we can see (by the eye of faith) approaching to succour us, is *the Lord, the Holy One, the Creator of Israel, our King : Who maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters.*

II. POINT.

We must call on Jesus for help, when in danger.

Our Lord was pleased to manifest His approval of Saint Peter's confidence in Him, by putting it at once to the test. It is thus He generally acts with regard to those who fearlessly shew a readiness to perform acts of heroic virtue out of love for Him. No offerings are more agreeable to Him than those which are due to the promptings of self-forgetfulness. Is it in this spirit that we instinctively act? Is it from a natural or supernatural impulse that we usually find our actions spring? After having asked God to shew us His Will, let us wait as Saint Peter did for His word of guidance: *Come*. Most probably like him too, we shall be reminded of our own weakness in withstanding the dangers by which we shall be encompassed, as we enter into a closer strife with the powers of darkness. They will doubtless array themselves against us more fiercely—the nearer we draw near to Jesus—the more we dare, for love of Him. Peter was permitted to lose somewhat of his confidence for a moment, when he found the wind so strong; and immediately he felt himself to be sinking beneath the waves upon which he had at first been borne up. Here we see what often occurs in the spiritual life. An imperfection, a thought of distrust, a yielding to fear, may interrupt the course of divine grace, and retard a soul that Jesus has called and encouraged to do great things for Him. At such times our prayer should resemble Saint Peter's: *Lord, save me!* The Saviour's gentle reproach we may also have to share with him: but let us not be downcast when rebuked for our little faith. Jesus will move towards us in the gracious condescension of His love, and uphold us,—and give us also cause to adore Him, saying: *Indeed Thou art the Son of God*: Thy mercy hath assisted us; in Thee will we trust more confidently

COLLOQUY.

I desire, O Jesus, to be guided at all times according to the manifestation of Thy Will: may I be prepared to encounter any trials or difficulties, so soon as I hear Thee bid me pass through them, and come nearer to Thee. In moments of depression, of alarm, or of distrust, let the prayer of Saint Peter rise to my lips: *Lord, save me!* Command what Thou wilt, O my Jesus; but be ever with me to sustain me—to deliver me from all dangers.

RESOLUTION.

Promptly to do the bidding of Jesus, being more forgetful of self.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee. Jesus said: Come!

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Seventeenth Week after Pentecost.—Thursday.

The value of the soul.

What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?—S. MATT. XVI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine with what impressive earnestness Jesus asked this question; *What exchange shall a man give for his soul?*

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Lord, that we may so meditate upon the value of our immortal souls, that we may be ceaselessly occupied in securing their eternal happiness.

I. POINT.

The esteem we should have for every soul God has created.

The three principal characteristics of the soul are: its nobility—its beauty—its value. Firstly: the soul is noble, because it finds its origin in God. Our bodies, it is true, are the work of His hands, but it is the immortal soul which is formed after His Divine Image. True nobility consists in belonging to God; and what in us is allied so closely to Him as our soul? *The Lord God breathed upon man, and he became a living soul.* Secondly: far surpassing our conception must the beauty of the soul be, bearing, as it does, a likeness to the Divinity of its Creator. We may cast our eyes upon the splendour of the sun—the brightness of the stars—the loveliness of nature's many charms—the perfection of the human body—but we shall find in any of these only a mere shadow of the beauty of the soul. It has been because the Saints have discovered by the light of faith, some of those celestial graces which constitute the beauty of the soul, that they have been ready to brave any perils in order to save even one from being lost eternally? Have we their faith, or zeal? Thirdly: our Lord's

words : *What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul*, plainly shew us that the soul is priceless—beyond all value. “God has created,” says Saint Chrysostom, “the earth, and this wonderful human body of ours, only for the service of the soul.” In it God delights, it is His temple, His dwelling-place. What is the soul worth? For the answer let us go to Gethsemani—the Prætorium—and Calvary!

II. POINT.

The care we ought to take of our souls.

The more the thought of the value of the soul is dwelt upon, the more are we encouraged to take care of it; to cultivate it in order to render it yet more perfect. How marvellous are the faculties of the soul! In its zeal it may encircle the world with the effects of its practical charity—by its obedience, it may conform to each one of God’s commands—and by its generosity endure untold sacrifices in order to glorify its Creator. And it has further capacities of acquiring grace, holiness, and merit. To obtain a greater abundance of illuminating grace, our aim must be (with regard to the interests of our souls) to learn true wisdom, by studying the Life of the Incarnate Word; by seeking to know God and His adorable perfections—contemplating them daily. . . . To increase in holiness we must exercise ourselves in the practice of solid virtues—raising ourselves, through humility, above the region of the world’s approbation—by detachment, above its idolatry of riches—by mortification—out of the reach of its pleasures—and by divine love, beyond the attractions of mere earthly affection. It behoves us often to see what value we are practically put-

ting upon our own soul—our first and chiefest care. Are we adorning it day by day with fresh acts of virtue? Do we look upon the body as the handmaid of the soul, and make that which is mortal absolutely subservient to that which is immortal? There is not a moment in our lives in which we may not be meriting an eternity of recompense. Oh, that we valued our soul now, as we shall at that moment when *it shall return to God, who gave it.*

COLLOQUY.

O my God, Thou hast entrusted me with the care of an immortal soul! Do thou help me to preserve it pure and holy, so that I may one day give it back to Thee with joy. Often may I contemplate its preciousness in Thy sight—its faculties—its eternal destinies. I can easily afford to lose all that this world has to bestow; but I must save my soul. It has been redeemed in Thy precious Blood, O Jesus, and cost me what it may, I will strive to adorn it with those virtues which will render it worthy to glorify Thee throughout eternity. Eternity! O my soul, for nothing will I give thee in exchange, for thou art beyond all price!

RESOLUTION.

To be more intent on preparing my soul for its return to God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

What exchange shall a man give for his soul?

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Seventeenth Week after Pentecost.—Friday.

The cure of the daughter of the Syrophenician woman.

A woman of Canaan, crying out, said to JESUS: Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David: my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil. Who answered her not a word. And His Disciples came and besought Him, saying: Send her away, for she crieth after us: And He answering, said: I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel. But she came and adored Him, saying: Lord help me. Who answering, said: It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to cast it to the dogs. But she said: Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters. Then JESUS answering, said to her: O woman, great is thy faith: be it done to thee as thou wilt: and her daughter was cured from that hour.—S. MATT. XV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus as He tries this woman's faith, by apparent rebuffs: He then greatly commends her confidence, and cures her child.

II. PRELUDE.

Make us to understand that Thou, O Lord, dost often delay the answer to our requests, in order to prove the reality of our faith.

I. POINT.

Jesus appeared unwilling to grant the petition of the Syrophenician woman—her faith being thereby tested.

Let us contemplate our Lord on His way to seek retirement, together with His Disciples. They therefore, as soon as they found that this Gentile woman was following them to complain of her calamity to their Master, and that He seemed not to heed her, *besought Him to send her away*. They did not understand His design in her regard. This stranger, had heard of the tender compassion of Jesus for the afflicted; and that He had arrived in the neighbourhood. She immediately acted upon the desire faith had awakened in her soul, of asking Him to cure her child. And although when she cried out: *Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David: He answered her not a word*, and the Disciples discouraged her by expressing a wish that she should be sent away, she was not dismayed. When we offer to God our petitions, or cry to Him in our afflictions, and He appears to take no notice; if at the same time those around us wound our feelings because they are unable or unwilling to lend us any sympathy, does our faith equal that of the woman of Canaan? does it resist the strain put upon it by God's silence? by each adverse circumstance? Are we apt to grow dejected if Jesus for a while *does not answer us a word*? Is our fervour comparable to this poor mother's? Are faith and charity as vividly displayed by us as by her? She was a Gentile, who had only just learned to know a little of Jesus. We are members of His Holy Church; have already received from Him such numberless and inestimable favours: we understand His promises, we

have made personal experience of His power and love, and yet ! do we never distrust Him ? Are not we—His friends (sometimes at least), surpassed in confidence, in perseverance, in fervour, by a comparative stranger ?

II. POINT.

The humility of the Syrophenician woman.

And when Jesus did speak, what did He say ?—that He had not been sent on earth by His Heavenly Father to confer His choicest blessings on the Gentiles, but on the House of Israel. Although our Lord's words seemed to exclude almost all hope for her, yet she takes out of them the little she can find, and owns her confidence in the Divinity of His power, by adoring Him and saying : *Lord, help me.* Lord help us also ! (let us unite with her in praying)—notwithstanding our unworthiness to be numbered amongst His faithful servants. . . . Surely He, who is full of compassion, will now grant this mother's prayer. Yes ! but not until He has given her an occasion of exhibiting another virtue, and gaining greater merit still. Does not her patience and does not her humility confound ours, as we find her meekly submitting to the severe test to which our Lord put them ? *It is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs : But she said : Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters.* The confidence of the humble soul cannot be shaken—humility is the sure result of true faith in God. We see faith and humility, in the case of this woman, triumphant ; her cause was gained ! Jesus said to her : *Great is thy faith : be it done to thee as thou wilt.* When

we are subjected to harassing delays, to stern reproaches, to some temporary refusal of our apparently laudable desires—when man tries our patience, or God tries our faith—in what spirit do we meet all this ?

COLLOQUY.

O my Divine Master ! I have known Thee so long—I have so often experienced instances of Thy mercy and Thy love, and yet the trust this Syrophenician woman placed in Thee, and her humble acceptance of Thy seeming rebuke put my confidence and humility to shame. How impatient do I not often become, when Thou dost prove me by not removing some affliction, or temptation, or trial, at my first request. Increase my faith in Thyself, O God, and teach me to be thankful for the opportunities Thou affordest me of exercising those virtues which in the end will infallibly obtain Thine own gracious reply : *Be it done to thee as thou wilt.*

RESOLUTION.

During this day to make frequent acts of humility, and of confidence in God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

To the humble God giveth grace.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Seventeenth Week after Pentecost.—Saturday.

On insincere devotion.

The Scribes and Pharisees said to Jesus: Why do Thy Disciples transgress the traditions of the ancients? Jesus answering, said: Why do you also transgress the commandments of God? Well hath Isaias prophesied of you saying: This people honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me.—S. MATT. XV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us adore Jesus as the Wisdom of God, and the Discerner of hearts.

II. PRELUDE.

Preserve us, O Eternal Wisdom, from that feigned devotion which dishonours Thee, and which Thou dost abhor.

I. POINT.

The principal characteristic of hypocrisy is disdainfulness towards others.

Pharisaical devotion is all the more dangerous, because they who practise it have an exterior appearance of great regularity and perfection. Severe in its maxims and in its requirements, it renders them austere as far as their neighbour is concerned: notwithstanding they are themselves

remiss in the observance of the commandments of God, and act contrary to the spirit of the divine law most unscrupulously. Why do you, they inquire (as did the Pharisees, of the Disciples) neglect this or that point? some minor point perhaps, to which they attach marked but unnecessary importance. Thus they speak and act in order to blind themselves and others to their serious violation of the practice of charity, meekness, truthfulness, or justice. Their eyes are ever open to perceive the smallest faults in their neighbour; while they will not see their own, which are much more grievous: they are quickly scandalised, and are constantly complaining of others' conduct; and all this under the pretext of great zeal for religion. Are we in the same category with the Pharisees of old? It is not impossible. Or is our piety like that which Jesus commended and practised? really founded upon the law of God, every iota of which He fulfilled. "True devotion," says Saint Francis of Sales, "ought to be established upon the foundation of strong virtue, and built up in the spirit of faith and charity." If we possess these virtues our piety will be solid and real, and will prove itself steady under the many temptations which assail those who seek to please God with heart and soul.

II. POINT.

Lip-service only, is the second characteristic of hypocrisy.

This people honoureth Me with their lips: but their heart is far from Me. These are they who in their words make loud profession of loving God and serving Him. Their manner of speaking may appear quite sublime, while all the time their hearts are wholly set upon that which is terrestrial. He, Who cannot err in judgment, says of such: *In*

vain do they worship Me. Solid piety is strong to despise the language and opinions of the world: it holds itself independent of earthly affections, and selfish inclinations. It affords us also strength to bear, not only the defects of others, but also our own, with patience; by it we are enabled to keep up our courage; having undertaken the correction of our faults, to persevere in this difficult but necessary task. If our piety be unfeigned, we shall not talk much, even with ourselves of our falls, to which even the just are liable; but quickly rise again, with an increased sense of our natural weakness, and of our entire dependence on God's help.—A truly devout soul is necessarily humble, for it knows its many infirmities, and sees the folly of seeking to hide aught from Him, *Who understandeth our thoughts afar off.* Rather is it a consolation that our Father knows the very intents of our heart. When Jesus denounced the Pharisees as hypocrites, He quoted the words of Isaias, as we have seen, in corroboration of His own personal judgment against them. To intensify our hatred of hypocrisy, let us further listen to what God had spoken by the mouth of His prophet: *Woe to you that are deep of heart, and hide your counsel from the Lord: whose works are in the dark, and who say: who seeth us and who knoweth us? This thought is perverse, saith the Lord.*

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, grant me Thy grace to avoid assuming a feigned appearance of goodness. May Thy solemn denunciation of hypocrisy make me watchful over myself, lest at any time unreality creep into my devotion, or I become forgetful of Thy words: *They who adore God, must adore Him in spirit and in truth.* Let my exterior piety be the counterpart of

my innermost sentiments of faith and love: may humility always be my guide, and self-abnegation my constant practice.

RESOLUTION.

To endeavour to make exterior and interior piety more exactly correspond in myself.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

God knoweth the secrets of the heart.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst teach.

FESTIVALS.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

Come from Libanus, My spouse, come: thou shalt be crowned.
—CANT. IV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the Virgin-Mother of Jesus, as she is transported by Angels into Heaven, and received there by her Son.

II. PRELUDE.

O Most Holy Trinity, by the honour to-day conferred upon Mary, grant us grace to love and venerate her more, as we, in spirit, witness her glorious Assumption.

I. POINT.

The death of the Mother of Jesus.

Let us pause by the death-bed of our Lady, for a few moments. Her years of bereavement are all told, her perseverance in the perfect way of virtue has been tested; the faithful discharge of her maternal duties towards the infant Church has enhanced her merits; and her pure soul at length escapes on the wings of love, to soar away to Him Who had

adorned it with such marvellous graces. Angels quickly fly to watch around that virginal form, over which Death is to have power for so short a space ; and which is not to see corruption. Flowers of Paradise have been culled to shed a fragrance there, and lend the charm of their beauty to the spot where the pure body of the Immaculate Mother of God awaits its resurrection. A few short days, and it will be re-animated—the glorious mystery of her Assumption into Heaven will be accomplished *Who is she that cometh forth as the morning, rising fair as the moon, bright as the sun ?* It is Mary—taken up by celestial attendants *into the bridal chamber of Heaven, where the King of kings sitteth on His starry Throne.* It is His most holy Mother who approaches ; and He rises to welcome her to the Fatherland about which they have so often conversed, when in the little house of Nazareth. She had welcomed Him to earth, had shared with Him humiliation and bitter suffering ; and now, He receives her into His embrace, and shews her the glory of God and of the eternal inheritance. The Mother of Jesus had stood beneath His Cross while the populace derided Him,—to-day He places her upon the throne prepared for her, near to His own, while the choirs of Angels rejoice to extol her as their Queen. In thought we accompany thee, O Mary ! as far as we can, on thy triumphal progress ; and contemplate thy entrance into Heaven : and long for the day when we shall see thee there, and join in the eternal strains of thy Magnificat. *Holy is His Name, That hath done great things, and exalted the humble.*

II. POINT.

We must imitate our Lady, if we desire to meet her in Heaven.

From the beginning of Mary's existence the fire of divine charity had been ever increasing within her heart, until at length love melted *the golden fillet of her mortal life*, and *the silver cord* was overstrained in her enraptured ecstasy. Does our love for God cause us to long most ardently for the hour of our release? Patient waiting and an intense desire to see Him, and enter into His joy, are not incompatible. . . . Are we maintaining such purity of heart, that we are worthy to be entitled the Spouses of the Son of Mary, and her true children? Our sorrows and sufferings could never be compared with those she endured; but are we bearing ours, whatever they may be, as she did hers? in union with Jesus, and for love of Him? Let us consider Mary's life of preparation for this day of triumph; and see if we are in any degree living her life over again. Mary is exalted higher in Heaven than any other Saint; not because she was the Mother of the King of kings, but on account of her perfect humility. Should not this thought make it less difficult for us to practise it? From the desert of this world, full of trials and afflictions, Mary passed in a transport of delight to the Celestial City, in obedience to the Divine summons: *Come! thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee: Come! thou shalt be crowned!* As she entered therein, *leaning on her Beloved*, and received from Him her royal diadem, and heard the salutations of the heavenly Hosts, did she not recal the Angel Gabriel's *Hail Mary*, when he visited Nazareth? and her own reply to his message: *Be it done unto me according to thy word?* Is not God faithful to recompense obedience to His Holy Will? Truly He is!

COLLOQUY.

Queen of Heaven and earth! I now unite with thee in

praising and magnifying God for the glories of thy coronation-day ; and I join with all who love thee (and who can fail to do so?) in offering thee my glad felicitations. Thy humility, Thy purity, Thy obedience, were the steps in the ladder of divine love which raised thee to that height of glory, whence thou dost now look down on me, thy child. Obtain for me the grace to elevate my soul toward Heaven, and may the thought of thy glorious Assumption produce in it an intense longing to reach that Blessed Country, where thou art *at the right hand of the King, in gilded clothing, surrounded with the variety of loveliness*, and eternity of beauty which *God has prepared for those that love Him.*

RESOLUTION.

To re-animate my love for God, by the contemplation of His love for Mary.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Who is this that cometh up from the desert, leaning on her Beloved ?

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Saint Bartholomew.

The Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew.

You shall be brought before governors and before kings for My Sake, for a testimony to them and to the gentiles : You shall be hated of all men for My Name's Sake.—S. MATT. X.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine Saint Bartholomew recalling these His Master's prophetic words, when they were being fulfilled in his case.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, if we may not give our lives for Thee, let us at least offer Thee our ardent desire to sacrifice ourselves entirely to Thy service.

I. POINT.

The lesson of zeal which Saint Bartholomew teaches us.

Nathanael said to Jesus: *Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel.* This was his first confession of faith in Jesus Christ; his last was expressed when (eleven years after his Master's death) he laid down his life for His Sake. We know but little of the actual work done by this Disciple—named by our Lord, Bartholomew—save that soon after the Ascension of Jesus, he began the mission allotted to him in India; and that afterwards in Asia Minor, he also preached the faith. He exercised those miraculous powers which Jesus had conferred on all His Apostles; and it was in consequence of the conversions effected by the manifestation of His power over evil spirits, that the idolatrous priests of Armenia became enraged against him, and caused him to be put to death. . . . Holy Church awakens in our minds to-day a grateful remembrance of the truth that we are all, together with the Apostles, members of the body of Christ. We do well to compare our lives with theirs, and see if we, according to our ability, are fulfilling the duties of our several callings. What painful toil did not each Apostle undergo, in order to

withdraw souls from the tyranny of the devil, and gain them for their Lord! And we! what have we done? where are our sufferings? our labours? Where are the sinners converted, brought nearer to God by our influence? Is it possible that any may be farther off from Him, by our fault? What fruits have been borne by us, wherewith to enrich the Church? As we humble ourselves at the sight of our shortcomings, let us prove our devotion to the Saints by confiding to them our desire to obtain the better gifts of God's grace, that we may in future serve Him as they did. O thou who didst suffer martyrdom on this day, obtain for us more of the spirit of zeal and of constancy!

II. POINT.

The lesson of self-sacrifice which Saint Bartholomew imparts to us.

This Saint is represented with a flaying knife in his hand; and his very effigies remind us how pleasing to God it is that we should despoil ourselves of all that might keep us back from Him. Saint Bartholomew preached the Gospel unflinchingly; and, as his Master had foretold, *he was hated for His Name's Sake*. He was condemned to be flayed alive by his barbarous persecutors; and to this cruelty, as we know, he willingly submitted, rather than deny his faith as a Christian. . . . How we shrink from even the smallest deprivation! Do we not shun the effects of poverty—discomfort—inconvenience? Oh, where is our readiness to suffer the loss of reputation, esteem, the world's approbation? If we will render ourselves worthy to be the chosen victims of the love of God, now is the time to be despoiling ourselves of our love for the pleasures of sense—to get rid of our natural

over-tenderness towards self—of self-love in its many forms. If we would also entirely cast aside those restraints of human respect, which prevent our confessing Jesus Christ with holy freedom, how much more we should resemble the Martyrs, *who fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul!* What a perfect sacrifice of self was that which Saint Bartholomew offered up to God? So, in order to save our souls and acquire eternal life, we may be called upon to sacrifice ourselves in ways most painful to nature. Our daily life should be a life of self-immolation—the best, the only preparation for those greater sacrifices God may demand of us, in order to win the crown He has destined for Martyrs in desire, if not in very deed. Are we ready to make an entire oblation of ourselves, whatever the sufferings involved may be, in the same spirit of rejoicing with which the Saint of to-day offered himself, *as a victim of holocaust?*

COLLOQUY.

How perfect must Saint Bartholomew have been in the practice of heroic virtues, to be ready and willing to suffer so cruel a martyrdom in his Master's cause! How little did he know what a glorious example he would be called upon to give to the whole world, when he accepted Thy invitation, O Lord, and Thy words of forewarning: *Follow Me; he that taketh not up his cross, is not worthy of Me: he that shall lose his life shall find it.* Oh, that I might, at least in some degree, imitate this Apostle and Martyr by divesting myself of those natural and unmortified propensities, which are a hindrance to my preparation for any greater sacrifice Thou mayst hereafter demand of me, O Jesus, Strength of Martyrs.

RESOLUTION.

Often to invoke Saint Bartholomew during this day, that he may intercede for me.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He that shall lose his life for Me shall find it.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Birth of Mary is the source of gladness to all people.

My perfect one is but one.—CANT. VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us go in thought, to visit the new-born child in her cradle, and rejoice in the Birth of Mary, together with her parents.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, give us grace to honour with due solemnity the day on which Thy beloved Mother was born ; a day—the remembrance of which rejoices the Angels and Saints in Heaven, and the just on earth.

I. POINT.

The greatness of Mary in her birth.

The nobility and holiness of her ancestors would have rendered the birth of our Lady illustrious ; but the union which was to exist between her and the Saviour of the world, enhances more than any other circumstance, the marvellous greatness of the event we contemplate to-day. Before us lies the Child of whom God had spoken in the garden of Eden, ere He pronounced sentence of death on the race of mankind. She it is *who should crush the serpent's head*, by bringing forth the Incarnate God : through her heart is to pass the sword of sorrow : she will take a Mother's part in the sufferings of her Son : she—the Daughter of kings—will reign hereafter as the Mother of the King of kings amid the glories of Paradise. Union with God ! this is the secret of her greatness. And as that union was perfect, so does her greatness from the first moment of her existence, far exceed that of any other creature. We reverently, lovingly greet thee, O Mary, as we gaze upon thine infant form ; and in the words of Holy Church, exclaim : *Happy art thou, O Virgin Mary, and worthy of all praise : because from thee arose the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God : Alleluia.* Most noble art thou by reason of thy ancestry—but incomparably more so since thou art to be united to God, by the ties of flesh and blood. How glorious a destiny ! While we rejoice in contemplating thy sublime consecration to the service of thy Creator, let us thank and praise Him also for permitting us to consecrate our lives to Him ; and for having united us spiritually to Himself, through the mystery of the Incarnation. Help us, O Mary, to be faithful to our high

calling ; as thou wert to thy vocation, as the Virgin-Mother of God.

II. POINT.

In exalting Mary we yet more exalt her Son.

With heart and mind let us sing praises to Christ on this sacred solemnity of Mary—the peerless Mother of God. It is impossible to separate Mary from Jesus in our thoughts. They are indissolubly united in our minds and hearts. Mary appears before us on the day of her Nativity, as the Morning Star just risen above the horizon ; and at the same moment—as we gaze on its pure loveliness—we catch the first gleam of that glorious Light of lights, which its soft rays are heralding. We contemplate her, who has been conceived without sin, making her entrance into this world as the Harbinger of Him, Who is the Saviour of mankind. God has prepared for Himself a Tabernacle, a House of purest gold, wherein He will array Himself in the garb of His most Sacred Humanity. *Thou art truly the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel : sprung from a royal race, Mary shines forth before the world.* How greatly should we love her Name ! “Heaven and earth,” says Saint Francis, “recognise no other name after that of her dear Son, which has procured for us so many graces, has sustained our hopes so effectually ; or has afforded us such sweet delights, as that of Mary.” Happy are we if we truly cherish that name, and invoke it reverently, both in sorrow and in joy. What better can we do to express our love and confidence than to have recourse to her for help, whose name from this day forth and throughout eternity is entwined with that of Jesus ?

COLLOQUY.

Hail, Virgin most pure, of immaculate birth! How beautiful is thy rising, O clear Star of the Morning! I adore Thee, my God, as I contemplate the Nativity of her on whom Thou didst bestow such incomparable privileges. May she, by her intercessions, procure for me the grace henceforth to love Thee better; and for her sake, to be more faithful in seeking to please her Beloved Son, by the practice of those virtues which shone forth so brilliantly in her, during her whole life. Under every circumstance of my life, I will have recourse to thee, O Mary. Mother of my Saviour, pray for me!

RESOLUTION.

To render thanks to God very often to-day, for His gift to us of Mary.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Hail, Virgin most pure, of immaculate birth.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

Love and veneration are due to the Holy Cross.

God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord JESUS Christ. . . . Then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven.—GAL. VI. . . . S. MATT. XXIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the circumstances which accompanied the return of the Holy Cross to Jerusalem. The Emperor Heraclius, having captured this sacred relic from the Persians, carried It upon his shoulder with every token of respect, to the place appointed for Its Exaltation.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Lord, deeply to venerate Thy Holy Cross—in It to place our hopes of salvation.

I. POINT.

The sentiments of love and respect with which the Faithful venerate the Cross of Jesus.

Truly Christian souls, seeing in the Holy Cross the pledge of the Saviour's ardent love, have ever entertained for It sovereign respect. What is the Cross? It is that Sacred Altar—the most sacred ever set up on the earth—on which was completed the Sacrifice of the Adorable Victim, the

Incarnate Son of God. It is from the Cross—on which Jesus being lifted up, draws us to Himself—that He preaches to us continually concerning the true value of the soul : He Who speaks therefrom is the Eternal Truth. The Cross is an open book wherein we read the wonders of God's mercy—of His justice—and concerning the enormity of sin : in a word, the science of the Cross is the knowledge of God and of ourselves.—It is the embodiment of Christianity. What more precious than the Cross ! The Church, the Spouse of the Crucified, has ever regarded It as Her most costly jewel—Her priceless treasure. Therefore has She, from the day of Its Exaltation, surrounded it with honour. What does the Cross say to our hearts ? That tale of woe and of triumph which It recounts, fills us with tender and grateful love towards Him in Whom is all our hope. *O blessed Cross, which alone was found worthy to bear the Lord, the King of Heaven*, thou hast been the object of veneration to the Faithful for so many ages ; in thee we place our confidence, in thee will we glory, in thee will we repose with Jesus in suffering ; and at the hour of our death pass from thy embrace, to the joys of Paradise.

II. POINT.

The Cross is the life-long study of the elect.

The Cross—Jesus Crucified—these form the study which never wearies, the model of virtues which should be daily copied. Here we have a compendium of doctrines dear to us as life—a single glance at which is enough to teach us that we must die to ourselves, and live to Him that died for us. Whence have the Saints gained their knowledge of Jesus' love ; and of what He asked of their love, in return for

His ? Where did Saint Bernard learn the practice of fervent piety ? He says himself, it was before the Crucifix. It inspired Saint Francis with seraphic love ; and to It Saint Thomas owed His marvellous erudition. Of Saint Bonaventure it has been said, that he appeared when writing, to have no subject, save the Cross ; no other pen, save the Lance ; and that all he wrote was written with the Precious Blood. Enraptured, he exclaims, " It is good for us to be near the Cross : here will I stay, here will I watch, and read, and meditate ; and have constantly before my eyes this divine book, therein to study the science of salvation ". And then, we turn our thoughts to the avowal on the part of Saint Paul, that *he knew nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified* ; and that *he would glory in nothing, save in His Cross*. In It we also will glory, and in It alone, by God's help ; for through Its power do we not hope to join the company of the elect hereafter ? If it be all our glory now, what a day of joy will not that be, when we shall behold the Sign of the Son of Man appearing in the heavens. *O Cross ! thou art brighter than all the stars, famed throughout the world, lovely unto men, of all things the most holy !*

COLLOQUY.

I adore Thee, O Christ, and I bless Thee : because by Thy Holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world. In moments of prosperity, may I glory in It alone ; and in the hour of trial and humiliation, may I seek for consolation only in Jesus Crucified. I rejoice in the triumph of Thy Cross to-day, and at Its Exaltation in the sight of all people. May I, in heart and mind, exalt It far above all things else ; and in loving, study It more ; and studying, love It better ; till It be engraved on my every affection, and on all my thoughts. By Thy Cross unite me more closely to Thyself, O Jesus.

RESOLUTION.

To think often of the Cross as the Sign of the Son of Man, at His Second Coming.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

By the Cross the whole earth is filled with joy.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Saint Matthew—Apostle and Evangelist.

The extraordinary vocation, and fidelity of Saint Matthew.

And JESUS saw a man sitting in the custom-house, named Matthew: And He said to him: Follow Me. And he rose up and followed Him.—S. MATT. IX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus calling Matthew from the receipt of custom to follow Him.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, Thou hast also looked upon us, and bidden us leave the world and its allurements and become Thy disciples:—give us grace to obey Thee as our Beloved Master.

I. POINT.

The goodness of Jesus in calling Matthew to be an Apostle.

Each time we celebrate the Festival of any of the Apostles, we can but admire the effects of divine goodness in regard to their several vocations ; but to-day we find a peculiar attraction in the history of the conversion of Levi, the son of Alpheus. The miraculous power of grace is wonderfully portrayed in these words : *Jesus saw a publican sitting at the receipt of custom, and He said to him : Follow Me : And leaving all things, he rose up and followed Him.* At the word of Jesus, Matthew left a most lucrative employment, his own home with all its comforts, his many friends, to cast in his lot with One *Who had not where to lay His Head*, and Who held out to His Disciples promises of poverty, toil and persecution, even unto death. How extraordinary a vocation ! by means of which the wealthy publican became the companion of the poor and despised Jesus of Nazareth. Matthew had doubtless heard that He had performed wonderful works, and of the beauty and force of His doctrines ; this had tended to arouse his interest. Jesus seeks him out, and the influence of His presence and His words produce an immediate effect. "In the Person of our Lord," as Saint Jerome says, "the splendour of the Divinity although hidden beneath the veil of His Sacred Humanity, nevertheless revealed itself in His sweet dignity and gracious majesty." As we contemplate Him speaking to Matthew, are not we drawn to yield up ourselves more entirely, and to follow Him ? There is a new grace offered us to-day, as this scene is recalled to our memory. If we have already accepted His invitation to be of the number of His disciples, we may not

forget that it is fidelity to a vocation which wins the crown of glory. A grace once neglected or despised may be lost for ever.

II. POINT.

The results of Saint Matthew's correspondence to grace.

We find that so excellent a use was made of the grace and strength which accompanied this divine call to a higher life, that Matthew the Publican (as he humbly styles himself in his Gospel) became eventually not only an Apostle, but also an Evangelist and Martyr.—Are we so growing in grace as to merit one day to behold him, seated on that throne of glory for which he forsook his place *at the receipt of custom*? In order to imitate his fidelity we must not only give ourselves to Jesus Christ, but having been once released by Him from the shackles with which the world fetters its disciples, we must carefully avoid its many enticements and allurements. We cannot fail to admire Saint Matthew's freedom from human respect : directly he yielded to the power of divine grace, he hastened to shew marked honour to Jesus, by entertaining Him and His Disciples at a banquet prepared expressly for Him ; and at which many of his former companions—publicans and sinners—were present. Having done that which lay in his power, to prove to them that he was not ashamed of the choice he had that day made (and from this choice he never swerved !), his life of humiliation and poverty immediately began. After the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, he laboured in Jerusalem for a while, and then proceeded to disseminate his Master's doctrines in Ethiopia. This Apostle in the hour of his martyrdom, passed from the contemplation of his Dear Lord, as he offered the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, to the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision. Let

our prayer be, that we may never relinquish the decision we too have made of owning ourselves to be the disciples of Jesus—never shrink from confessing Him, under every circumstance of our lives.

COLLOQUY.

O Jesus, Master of the Apostles, have mercy on me ! Preserve me from ever drawing back from my resolution of belonging entirely to Thee. May I confess Thee on all occasions ; I often fail on this point ; human respect has still too much to do in the regulating of my words and actions. Help me by Thy grace, to serve Thee with more constancy ; and when death comes, may it find me doing my appointed work, or bearing my appointed sufferings, for Thy greater glory,—so that, like Saint Matthew, I may pass from Thy invisible Presence here, into the full light of the eternal Vision of God in Heaven.

RESOLUTION.

To be faithful to my vocation, fulfilling its duties with joy and promptitude.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He, leaving all things, rose up and followed Jesus.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

Saint Michael and the Holy Angels.

The Holy Angels protect us.

And there was a great battle in Heaven ; Michael and his Angels fought with the dragon.—APOC. XII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the legions of holy Angels, who are constantly employed, both in Heaven and on earth, in executing the commands of the Most High.

II. PRELUDE.

Glorious Saint Michael, and all ye heavenly Hosts! procure for us the grace to imitate your fidelity in the service of our Lord God.

I. POINT.

The holy Angels are our guides and protectors.

The holy Angels, with Saint Michael their prince, are pure spirits ; creatures endowed with eminent sanctity, in whom God is pleased to manifest His own infinite perfections ; whom He has created to promote His glory, and to constitute the heavenly court around Himself, their King. By means of the Angels, He evidences to the world His power and His goodness ; He makes them to be our protectors. He has established between men and Angels a wonderful relationship ; and He has likewise appointed them to act as ambassadors between Heaven and earth. These

sublime Intelligences contemplate unceasingly the Divine Majesty, and offer Him perpetual adoration, while at the same time they occupy themselves on our behalf with loving care ; they guard and guide us along the way of salvation. Saint Michael has been placed at the head of this celestial Army, and is the special defender of the Catholic Church : to his assistance Her past victories over Her foes, in many instances, may with certainty be attributed. To him, therefore, should our prayers be addressed in these days of Her great need. . . . With what lively sentiments of gratitude should we thank God for the honour He confers on us, in sending His Angels to watch over us continually ! If, at this moment, all the unknown services rendered to ourselves by the holy Angels were revealed, we should comprehend how indebted we are to our unseen protectors, and how great an esteem we should have for the souls of all men. Must they not indeed be of inestimable value, since God has entrusted them to the care of the princes of His celestial Court ? And ought we not to respond to this personal favour by a more entire fidelity ? a more perfect docility ?

II. POINT

The holy Angels are our examples.

These happy spirits have, since their creation, occupied in Heaven the respective positions assigned them by Divine Goodness. God has ordained for each a certain degree of splendour and distinction. They enjoy that uninterrupted happiness which is attached to absolute fidelity : this fidelity was proved when, under the Archangel Michael, they fought against Lucifer and his adherents ; and by their victory, assured to themselves immutable and eternal glory. They

are to us models of faithfulness in the hour of trial and combat. Placed, by Divine Providence, in that state of life which has well been termed "Heaven on earth," we are called upon to offer resistance to those evil spirits, that are jealous of our happiness. If, in this warfare, we remain loyal to our Sovereign, we shall ensure His eternal favour ; if we depend continually on Him for supplies of grace and strength, we shall maintain within our hearts the angelic virtues of purity, humility, and obedience. We are destined hereafter to live a life of perfect love for God, together with the heavenly Hierarchy : can we not unite with the Cherubim and Seraphim, in loving Him now ? Like the Dominations and Principalities, we have to bring that which is rebellious into subjection to the King of kings ; by mastering the evil passions of the soul, and gaining hearts for Him. Can we not thus triumph over the powers of hell ? Together with all the Angels and Archangels, we should make it our delight to accomplish the Will of God unceasingly—can we not fulfil it as they do, with joy and readiness ? As we meditate to-day upon their happiness, and whence it arises, let us not forget that it is while occupying themselves in the very functions assigned to them, that they enjoy unvarying peace, and unbroken union with God.

COLLOQUY.

I thank Thee, O God, for the unnumbered services rendered me by the holy Angels ; and for the consolation afforded me as I contemplate their happiness—ensured to them by their loyal fidelity. In all my spiritual combats, may I fight for Thy glory. As they unite perpetual adoration with active employment, so may I, as far as I am able, offer my thoughts and deeds to Thee, as acts of prayer and

praise. Enable me so to imitate their angelic virtues, that my union with Thee, begun on earth, may be consummated in that day when I shall see Thee, O my God, and the holy Angels.

RESOLUTION.

To call to mind during the day, with what fervour and fidelity the Angels serve God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

O most glorious Prince, Michael-the-Archangel, be mindful of me, and entreat the Son of God for me.

PRAYER.

With the Angels and Archangels, with the Thrones and Dominations, and with all the Heavenly Host, we sing an everlasting hymn to Thy glory, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth: Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

MEDITATIONS.

THE FIRST THURSDAYS IN EACH MONTH

First Thursday in August.

Mystery of the Consecration of the Eucharistic Species.

The Bread that I will give is My Flesh, for the life of the world: The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?—S. JOHN VI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus Christ promising His Disciples to give Himself to be their Food: the Jews took umbrage at this, and discussed the possibility of His being able to do as He promised.

II. PRELUDE.

O Divine Saviour, Thou hast instituted the Sacrament of Thy Love, in order to give Thyself to us: may we all acknowledge the greatness of this privilege, and profit by the inestimable grace it must needs impart to our souls.

I. POINT.

The miracle effected by the words of consecration.

The word of God is all-powerful : what can it not effect ? In the mystery of the Eucharist, Jesus speaks : *This is My Body—This is My Blood*—and the natural properties of the Bread and Wine we see upon the Altar are gone. If we trusted to our senses we should declare they were unchanged ; but by faith we believe that, as *from invisible things, visible things might be made*, so, within visible things, that which is Invisible may enfold Itself, and change their nature, though the outward appearance remains as before. When the immensity of God was confined and hidden within the Infant Form that lay in the Manger at Bethlehem, did not the Angels recognise therein the Eternal Word, by Whom all things were made ? And when He reposes on the Altar under the Form of material bread—the *Living Bread come down from Heaven* thus veiling Himself, according to His oft-repeated, and most clear promise—can there be a doubting heart in that Divine Presence ? Is it impossible for the supernatural to displace the natural, because our senses, with their finite powers, cannot give their evidence ? Is this the only case in which they fail ? Slight reflection, or deep reasoning, both give the same response. Jesus did not say that, without a miracle, He would feed the multitude with super-substantial Bread. He did not say that there was to be no exercise of faith, with regard to that Spiritual Food with which He would nourish His Church. On the contrary, although *the Jews strove*, and many of His Disciples said : *this saying is hard*, our Divine Lord did but reiterate His declaration : *My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed : He that eateth Me, the same also*

shall live by Me. And so, up to the end of time, by the almighty word of God, the daily miracle is wrought, and the Most Precious Body and Blood of Jesus envelop Themselves under the externals of the Eucharistic Species. They are veiled beneath these visible forms that we may know where we may find Him; *and come into His Presence with thanksgiving, and adore the Lord in His Holy Court.*

II. POINT.

The consequences of the Presence of Jesus on the Altars of His Church.

Our belief in the sacramental Presence of Jesus, while it rests on His own Word, is fortified by the thought, that God has made His Presence known to man under forms of which his natural senses have been cognisant to a limited extent, and faith has supplied what in them has been wanting. When He appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush, God was so truly present there, in a manner distinct from that in which He is omnipresent, that He bade Moses *take off his shoes from his feet*, for he was *standing on holy ground*. . . . The Holy Ghost *descended from Heaven in a bodily shape as a dove*, and again under the *appearance of tongues of fire*. . . . And Jesus having come amongst us, wills to remain with us *all days: a Hidden God*, making known the place where He dwelleth by the appearance of the Eucharistic Species. Oh! wondrous invention of His love, whereby He may unite in one and with Himself, all the members of His Beloved Church. We can but reverently adore that almighty word which, as in the beginning, still speaks, *and it is done*. This Divine word, coming from the mouth of the Priest, as if spoken again by the Son

of God, has a miraculous power which is felt by those who celebrate these Holy Mysteries, and by those who are present during this celebration. And as this word has power to change the very substance of that which is material, so, by its miraculous effects, it works a change in us also, if we approach these Divine Mysteries with a right disposition of heart. We are not what we were before ; an alteration has taken place : Saint Paul knew and felt this, when he said : *I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.* Faith and love corroborate these words of vivid truthfulness ; they find a responsive echo in the innermost recesses of the heart of every faithful discernor of the Body of the Lord, in the Sacrament of the Altar. Jesus said : *He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me.*

COLLOQUY.

With what purity of heart, with what loving devotion ought I not to approach the Sacred Mysteries of the Sanctuary ! Oh, the happiness of possessing the heaven-inspired conviction, that Jesus remains for ever in His Church, veiled beneath those humble externals which I see upon the Altar ! Thanks be to Thee, O God, for that precious gift of faith, which enables me to recognise the daily miracle wrought by those words of power : *Hoc est enim corpus meum : Hic est enim calix sanguinis mei.* Thou dost give Thyself, the Living Bread, to be my life : grant that I may ever abide in Thee, and Thou in me ; and according to Thy promise, O Lord, raise me up at the last day.

RESOLUTION.

To thank God often for the gift of faith in His Sacramental Presence.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

First Thursday in September.

On Eucharistic Thanksgiving.

And a hymn being said, they went out to Mount Olivet.—
S. MATT. XXVI.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us adore Jesus Christ, as He, together with the Disciples, said a hymn of thanksgiving after the Holy Mysteries of the Lord's Supper had been accomplished.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, Who dost so often deign to enter our hearts in Holy Communion, fill them with sentiments of profound gratitude.

I. POINT.

We must not neglect to offer our thanksgivings for the inestimable benefits of the Holy Eucharist.

Let us consider the beautiful lesson taught us, in the simple words which occur at the end of that passage in the

Holy Gospel, that contains the account of the instituting of the Eucharistic Feast. Jesus and His Disciples, we are told, sang a hymn of praise as the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries was concluded. Although our Lord was going forthwith to enter on His dread Passion, He rejoiced in spirit over the benefits to man, and the glory to His Heavenly Father, which would result from the Sacrament of His Love. With what joy and thankfulness ought we not to sing the praises of Him, Who gathers us around the Holy Table, saying : *Come, eat of My Bread, and drink the Wine which I have mingled !* The world may sing of its short-lived pleasures, and testify its mirth after its own manner of rejoicing ; but we, who are partakers of the Celestial Banquet, should raise both heart and voice to extol *the Lamb that was slain, and is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction.* Let us sing of Him we love, Who inebriates the weary soul, and fills every hungry soul with the Communion of His Most Precious Body and Blood : of Him Who renews the strength of our soul, and restores and maintains in it spiritual grace : of Him, the Lamb of God, Who takes away our sins, and grants us peace : His peace of union and of love, of which the world knows nothing ; and which it can never destroy. *We will sacrifice to Him the sacrifice of praise, and pay to Him our vows in the sight of all the people : in the courts of the house of the Lord.*

II. POINT.

The Eucharist is an act of praise to God.

How can we manifest our gratitude to God? *What shall we render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to us ?* Wherewithal shall we satisfy Him for all the benefits

He hath so liberally provided, for all His gifts of pardoning mercy, for all the favours we yet expect at His hands? What can supply for our indigence? We can offer ourselves by Thee and in Thee, O Lamb of God, to the Heavenly Father. Of ourselves we have nothing : all our acts of praise, as well as those of supplication, we lay upon the Altar, that they may rise up to Him in union with the merits of the Great Sacrifice, the Pure Oblation which *is offered to His Name, from the rising of the sun, even to the going down.* Thus may we pay our debt of gratitude to the Eternal God, Who accepts the offering of our thanks and adoration, in union with the perfect homage rendered to Him by the Adorable Victim, our Eucharistic Lord. At the uplifting of the Holy Sacrifice do we not seem to hear a voice from Heaven, speaking, to confirm our faith, out of the bright cloud of mystery which ever overhangs the Tabernacle? and to assure us of the acceptance of our prayers and praises?—*This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased,* and for the sake of Whose merits I am content to receive each act of thanksgiving offered Me through Him. . . . *By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise always to God.*

COLLOQUY.

O ye Angels, who are ever encircling the Holy Altar, and who see the Face of Him Whom I there adore, with you I join in praise and adoration.—Bless God for me ! I know he will not disdain the acts of Eucharistic thanksgiving that I offer in union with the Divine homage rendered Him by His Beloved Son. Bless Jesus for me ! help me to tell Him how much I love Him, although I cannot yet praise Him as I ought. Bless for me the Holy Spirit ! Who inspires within

my soul the hope of beginning ere long, the endless strain of: *Alleluia: Salvation to our God, Who sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb.*

RESOLUTION.

To offer better acts of thanksgiving, in union with the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

By Him let us offer the sacrifice of praise always to God.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

MEDITATIONS.

THE FIRST FRIDAYS IN EACH MONTH.

First Friday in August.

The Heart of Jesus is a Source of happiness in Heaven and on earth.

This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.—
S. MATT, III.

I. PRELUDE.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is regarded with inconceivable complacency by the Most Holy Trinity; while Angels beholding, adore.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, make us to increase in love and devotion for Thy Sacred Heart; and, by the attractiveness of Thy purity and holiness, draw us on to study and imitate Its virtues, that so our happiness may be also increased.

I. POINT.

The Heart of Jesus draws forth the complacency of the Eternal Trinity.

After sin entered the world, it presented for thousands of years, a scene of rebellion and disorder. Far from receiving from men the homage of adoration and love due to Him, God saw that they were forgetting both their origin and their sublime destiny, and seemed only bent on disfiguring in themselves the Divine Image—on outraging their Creator. O God ! could it be, that Thy highest work in nature would bring about its own utter destruction ? How lamentable a picture is portrayed by the words : *God seeing that the wickedness of men was great upon earth, was touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, and He said : it repenteth me that I have made them.* And later on, after that He had chosen a special people, and instructed them in His law, we find Him thus speaking by His prophet : *The law is torn in pieces, and judgment cometh not to the end, because the wicked prevaileth against the just.* But when the fulness of the time was come, Jesus appeared, and in Him, and by Him, were all things re-established and restored. That which He had made, He—the Word—came to renew ; *the earth budded forth the Saviour*, and for the first time since Adam's fall, a perfect homage of loving adoration was paid by man to the Heavenly Father. Henceforth He was to be known, honoured, and magnified aright, by the Incarnate Word, Who also as the One Perfect Sacrifice, alone could expiate the sins of the world. O God ! at length Thou couldst look upon a Heart essentially pure and holy (in which Thou didst recognise Thine own Image), and contemplate It as the master-piece of Thy creative power ! Earth hears the expression of Thy

Divine satisfaction; *This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.*

II. POINT.

The Heart of Jesus, in the Eucharistic Sacrament, is the Source of happiness to His Church on earth.

For the faithful soul that loves God, its earthly sojourn is a time of trial and sadness. We see, alas! many injuries done to Him, we endure many afflictions on our own account, in heart and mind, we are exposed to various temptations, and constant peril. Yet there is one unspeakable consolation in this land of exile: Jesus has fixed His Abode here in the Divine Eucharist. *How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.* Let us approach the Holy Altar, and draw quite near to the Saint of saints Who dwelleth there, that we may hear the beating of the Sacred Heart—the pulsation of Its love for us. . . . Its love for God the Father, being perfect, is worthy of Its Object: we rejoice in this thought, and unite our homage to that of the Incarnate Son of Mary. . . . In the Heart of Jesus, the weary traveller journeying through this world, finds repose and a renewal of strength—the spiritual combatant seeks the cure of His wounds, and meets with fresh encouragement—the sinner obtains pardon and peace—the afflicted heart finds consolation—the tepid soul rekindles its fervour. And more, it is in the Heart of Jesus that our souls taste the sweetness of divine love, and begin on earth *to drink of the torrents of pure delight*—with which God inebriates His elect. From It flows, as from a fountain, Water to cleanse, and Blood to give new life. Increase, O Sweet Jesus, our devotion and love towards Thy Sacred Heart,

and replenish our souls continually with the graces which flow from It.

COLLOQUY.

O Sacred Heart! in Heaven and on earth Thou art loved, praised, and adored. Thou shalt ever be to me the Object of my best and tenderest affection. I think of Thine own joys and Thine own sorrows, Thy goodness and Thy compassion, of Thy being the hope of the dying, and the delight of the Saints; and I feel that eternity will not be too long for the contemplation of Thy love and Thy perfections. I desire to consecrate myself more entirely to Thy service here, so that I may merit to adore Thee for ever, together with the Angels and Saints in bliss.

RESOLUTION.

To love the Sacred Heart of Jesus more devotedly.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I implore; that I may daily love Thee more and more!

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

First Friday in September.

The Heart of Jesus is that of a Wise Instructor.

We know that Thou art come a Teacher from God.—
S. JOHN III.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us consider that it is the desire of the Sacred Heart we should be truly wise, learning of It the virtues which belong to our salvation.

II. PRELUDE.

The Heart of Jesus instructs us in a most persuasive manner.

I. POINT.

Jesus is the Divine Teacher Whom we should hear, and every detail of Whose instruction we should follow.

Jesus came down from Heaven to give us lessons in all those virtues, which by Him are cherished and highly valued. He therefore, in a most distinct, and at the same time persuasive manner, bids us study the characteristics of His Divine Heart. *Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart,* and again : *I am not come to be ministered unto, but to minister.* How can we fail to be touched by these words of the Son of God, Who illustrates them by His own undeviating practice of gentleness, humility, and readiness to serve others. And yet can we truly say we are imitating it? Are we to

be easily recognised as His followers? as having been learners in His school? Let us listen again to His Words : *By this shall all men know that you are My Disciples, if you have love one for another.* The lessons in charity given us by Jesus are innumerable; has He not a right to expect that we should do credit to His teaching? But we may not, cannot say, there is no difficulty in the acquiring of these virtues of the Sacred Heart : on the contrary, we know that the process of making them our own, demands both effort and combat. Our Lord has not hidden this truth from us, by any means. He forewarns us of the fact, that there is a daily cross to be carried, a perpetual warfare to be waged, if we would become thoroughly exercised in the way of humility—of meekness—of charity. What do we candidly think of the progress we are making? Is it not very slow considering our many advantages?

II. POINT.

The Heart of Jesus instructs by the most practical examples.

I have given you an example, says our Adorable Master, that as I have done to you, so you do also. What tender compassion and inexhaustible charity were evinced in all the miracles He wrought! what meek gentleness He manifested under provocation! what incomprehensible humility in His conduct, at all times! *I seek not My own glory, but the glory of Him that sent Me,* was His rule of action : and all Jesus did, proved that He thus spoke out of the abundance of His Heart. He imposed silence on those who wished to publish the good He had effected in their behalf; and withdrew into solitude when they desired to make Him a king. He felt for sinners so great a compassion, that He treated them with peculiar kindness : He even sat at table with them, so that

He might gain their good-will, and hold them back from the way of perdition ; verifying by His conduct His words of pity : *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice : the Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save.* O Sacred Heart of Jesus ! how could it be that we should not love and practise the virtues of which Thou dost give us so many practical and touching examples ? May we henceforth testify our devotion to Thee, not only by our words, but still more by our actions.

COLLOQUY.

O Thou, Who hast taught me so many lessons of solid virtue by Thy precepts, carried out into deeds of perfect sanctity, I beseech Thee, help me in my resolution to conform my life more entirely to Thine. As I continue to learn of Thee, *Who art meek and humble of heart*, may I during this month make daily progress in the way of perfection ; and thus prove the sincerity of my devotion to Thy most Sacred Heart.

RESOLUTION.

To conform my life more entirely to the Life of Jesus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.

MEDITATIONS.

THE SATURDAYS IN EACH MONTH.

First Saturday in July.

The Mystery of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin.

Mary went into the hill country : And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth.—S. LUKE I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the Mother of the Saviour on her way to the city of Juda, where Zachary and Elizabeth dwelt.

II. PRELUDE.

Make us to understand, O Mary, the wonderful effects which the in-dwelling Presence of Jesus produces in the soul, so that we may strive to retain It : to this end may we act in compliance with thy counsels, and the teaching of thine own example.

I. POINT.

The in-dwelling Presence of Jesus, caused the Blessed Virgin to be replenished with ardent charity towards her neighbour.

Endowed with extraordinary graces, consequent on the Presence of Jesus, one of Mary's first desires was, that the house of Zachary, and the child whose birth had been miraculously announced, should partake in her blessedness. For a little while, the most sacred Mystery of the Incarnation held her absorbed in the deepest contemplation; and this spirit of recollection might well have kept her in retreat within her home: but true *charity seeketh not her own*, and intuitively Mary perceived that the hour had already come, for sacrificing her inclination of remaining alone with God. Understanding His loving purpose with regard to the human race, she rises in haste to carry out the desires with which Divine Charity inspires her, of causing others to be sharers in the Benediction of Jesus' Presence. She was henceforth to be a channel of grace to all mankind. And the first results of this design on the part of God, were to be visible in the family of the precursor of His Son. He, being yet unborn, was thus freed from original sin, and witnessed to the joy produced by his nearness to Him, Who dwelt in the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin. Elizabeth herself was, from the same cause, filled with the Holy Spirit of God, Whose Will was so perfectly accomplished by His lowly Handmaid. Oh! happy are they who are intimately united to Jesus! Their very presence brings Him near to others, and inspires the love of all that is good and holy. And God delights to make use of such persons: they, even unconsciously are constantly doing Him service, by causing piety

to make a favourable impression on the minds and hearts of those, with whom they come in contact. The thought of God is awakened by their words and actions: there is an ideal, yet veritable association, between their personal influence and the omnipresence of God.

II. POINT.

Jesus produced in Mary lively sentiments of the greatness of God, and consequently those also of deep humility.

Elizabeth, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, found no expression too exalted, whereby to extol the happiness and dignity of Mary. But we seem, says Saint Bernard, to hear this lowly Virgin replying thus, to her cousin's inspired words of welcome and congratulation: "You magnify me and proclaim my blessedness amongst women; but as for me, I can but magnify God, to Whom alone belongs the glory of all the marvels He has accomplished in me and by me. You call me the Mother of our Lord, but I think myself too highly honoured to be spoken of as His Handmaid. It is true that *all generations shall call me blessed*, but even in this, all the glory must revert to God, Whose goodness alone has caused Him to regard my lowliness." Such were the sentiments inspired by the Presence of Jesus, in the heart of the most highly privileged of all creatures. She saw God only, as the Source of all good—of every grace. Let us examine ourselves before Him, and see what effects our actual contact with Jesus produces in us, and on others. Have we a pure disinterested love for our neighbour? Do we realise in ourselves a true sense of the greatness of God, and of our nothingness? Are we so absorbed in these certainties, that we forget ourselves, and our own tem-

poral interests? We should strive practically to believe the words of a pious writer : "Such a person is unknown, who could be united to God, and not be full of zeal and divine charity".

COLLOQUY.

O Blessed Virgin ! Mother of Holy Love, give me to share, at least in some degree, in thy humility and charity ; of which, in the mystery of the Visitation thou dost present to me a striking example. Help me to sanctify the household of which I form part ; and to edify others by evincing the sincerity of my desire to take the last place. O Mary, like thee, I would accustom myself to say nothing, and do nothing which may detract from the glory of God, to Whom alone all glory is due. Thine own words shall be constantly on my lips : *My soul doth magnify the Lord ; His mercy is from generation to generation unto them that fear Him.*

RESOLUTION.

To avoid all self-seeking.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

My soul doth magnify the Lord.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.

Second Saturday in July.

Mary is our Advocate with her Son.

Behold your Mother.— S. JOHN XIX.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Mary in Heaven, praying unceasingly to her Divine Son for us.

II. PRELUDE.

O Mary, thou hast so much power over the Heart of Jesus, therefore intercede with Him for us, so that we may increase in grace, and secure our salvation by thy assistance.

I. POINT.

Mary is a powerful advocate.

Saint Ambrose says that Jesus Christ having deigned to choose Mary to be His Mother, by the same act of His will placed Himself under the happy obligation of being subject to her. The Son of God conformed His will to that of His dearly loved Mother, when on earth; He perfectly respected the spirit and letter of the law of filial obedience, laid down in the fourth commandment: *He did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil.* Now that the Blessed Virgin sits at the Right Hand of the King of Heaven, *on the Throne set for His Mother*, she as *our* Mother and Advocate listens to our

petitions, and presenting them to her Son, pleads on our behalf. Saint Bernardine hesitates not to say that our Lady exercises royal authority ; since she has received power to dispense the graces for which we ask God, through her. To Saint Bridget it was revealed that our Divine Saviour cannot in Heaven refuse anything to her, who never refused Him anything on earth ; and, for His Sake, underwent, in a spirit of perfect conformity to God's Will, so great suffering and humiliation. And the same Saint heard the blessed in Heaven say to her : O chosen One of God, what is there that it is impossible for thee to obtain from thy Son ! If *the continual prayer of a just man*—of a good ordinary Christian on earth *avails much*, what must be the force of the Immaculate Queen of Heaven's perpetual intercessions? Of this we may feel confident, that she is able to win by them all that God is able to bestow.

II. POINT.

Mary is a compassionate Advocate.

Mary, through God, knows all our necessities and infirmities, and feels for us, as does a most tender Mother. Therefore can she the more efficaciously plead our cause, and therefore are we the more encouraged to go to her with confidence. Saint Augustine, considering the intensity of zeal with which she asks Divine favours for us, calls our Lady our one Support and Defence. The other Saints pray with us and for us ; but they join their intercessions to those of their Queen, because they know how this enhances their value in the sight of Jesus. We do well to follow their example. Without doubt, Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God the Father and mankind ; but because men may fear to approach Him Who is one day to be their Judge,

they are the more easily preserved from despair and led to repentance, if they may turn to the Mother of the Divine Majesty, and speak to her as their Mediatrix. Who more fit than she to fulfil this office? How many, as we well know, will throughout eternity thank her for having guided them to Jesus. We can assist in the work of gaining graces for the sinful, the timorous, the despondent, by leading them to Mary. "Take courage," says Saint Bernard, "you who are fearful ; dry your tears, you who are in misery ; for the Blessed Virgin is your powerful and compassionate Advocate, she is the Mediatrix of the whole human race, and at the same time the Mother of your Judge—of your God." We come to Thee, glorious Mother of God, whom the Church of the Elect calls the Mother of Mercy, and beg thee, of thy clemency, to speak of us often to thy Son, Jesus.

COLLOQUY.

In taking upon Himself human flesh in thy chaste womb, O Mary, Jesus willed to become thy debtor : and now He has placed at thy disposal all the riches of the Divine mercy. Obtain from Him permission to shower upon me, His Spouse, the graces of which I am most in need to make me more worthy of this title. What a joy it is to know that thou dost so often speak to thy Son of me, and my eternal interests ! In safer hands I could not leave them. I trust in thee to help me, in life and in death.

RESOLUTION.

Every day to have recourse to Mary's help, and to her clemency.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Pray to the Lord for me, O Mary, my Mother.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Third Saturday in July.

The devotion of the Scapular.

He that honoureth his mother is as one that layeth up a treasure.—ECCLES. III.

I. PRELUDE.

We represent to ourselves Mary offering the holy Scapular to Saint Simon Stock, as a pledge of her protection.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Mary, that in meditating upon the signal favour thou has bestowed on Thy servants in revealing to them the devotion of the holy Scapular, we may feel an increase of gratitude and confidence towards thee.

I. POINT.

The Scapular is a pledge of our allegiance to Mary.

The Blessed Virgin is the Mother of all men. Since she formed this relationship with them at the foot of the Cross,

there is not one who has not been the object of her maternal solicitude, and tenderness. But those who wear her Scapular have a more abundant share in her favours, as she herself said when bestowing it in person, on one of her most devoted servants of the order of Mount Carmel. It is her special livery. They who put it on, are henceforth reckoned as belonging to her household. It indicates their adoption into her immediate family, as her true children. What can be more honourable, than to wear a badge which distinguishes us in the sight of the Angels—which attracts their loving approbation? for they regard us as the devoted retainers of their Beloved Queen, and recognise in us the children of the Mother of God. It was esteemed a high honour when Pharaoh put a chain of gold on the neck of Joseph, and Balthasar bestowed a like favour on Daniel, but such marks of distinction may not be compared with that of receiving the pledge of an eternal alliance with the Virgin-Mother of Jesus. We do well often to recal the obligations we are under of faithfully serving her—of proving ourselves worthy of the honour of wearing this token of our allegiance to the Queen of Heaven.

II. POINT.

The Scapular is a pledge of Mary's love and protection.

The Scapular is a certain pledge of the loving care the Virgin-Mother bestows on us her children, and is an abundant source of benedictions. Like a coat of mail it defends its wearer against the attacks of Satan, and enables him to feel strong to resist evil. Often has the sight of it recalled sinners to a remembrance of their engagement to be for ever the adherents of Mary; and induced them to repent of their want of fidelity, and renew their vow of fealty. If we fulfil

the obligation contracted in adopting this badge, we shall, according to our state in life, maintain chastity, and practise all the different virtues which our Lady loves. The prescribed prayers are their safeguard; the accompanying good works lead up to real sanctification, which renders us worthy of the heavenly inheritance. Certain it is that this devotion has delivered many a soul from eternal death; and that Mary shews herself to be most unmistakably the patron and protector of such as have been invested with the Scapular. It is our duty to induce others to be enrolled in the confraternity of Mount Carmel, by making known the promise given by our Lady: *Whosoever dies whilst wearing this habit, shall be preserved from eternal pains. It is to be a sign of salvation, a safeguard in danger, and a pledge of peace and eternal alliance with myself.* Mary was prefigured by the mystic cloud which Elias, from the top of Mount Carmel, perceived rising up out of the sea, bringing the rain for which he prayed. In answer to our prayers does not our Lady, like a rain-cloud, rise from the ocean of God's mercy, and pour forth those graces which refresh our parched and weary souls? Let us to-day in spirit, climb the heights of Carmel, and thank God for the favours He showers upon the Church, through Mary.

COLLOQUY.

Rightly art thou named, O Carmel! a garden abounding with the fruit of every virtue, watered by the rain-cloud of mercy! What cause have I for thankfulness that I am a partaker in the privileges promised by thee, O Mary, to those who enrol themselves amongst the children of Carmel. Forgive me all my past want of faithfulness to the obligations laid upon me by the wearing of the Scapular; watch over

me at all times, and obtain for me the grace of final perseverance.

RESOLUTION.

To secure the privileges attached to the Scapular of Mount Carmel, by faithfulness to the obligations which the wearing of it entails.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

All her domestics are clothed with double garments.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Fourth Saturday in July.

Mary comes to the aid of the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.—I. COR. III.

I. PRELUDE.

We represent to ourselves Mary, the Queen of the Church, dispensing gifts from the boundless treasury of God's mercy, upon the children of men who need her assistance, either on earth or in Purgatory.

II. PRELUDE.

O Hope of Christians ! to thee may we look for succour not only on earth, but when suffering for the debts we owe to the eternal justice of God.

I. POINT.

Mary comes to the assistance of her servants in Purgatory.

Happy are the servants of the Mother of Mercy, for her loving protection accompanies them during life ; and then follows them beyond the tomb, even into the midst of the fires of Purgatory. The more they excite compassion on account of their suffering—the more they feel their utter powerlessness to help themselves—so much the more will Mary's maternal care and pity prompt her to extend to these poor souls, all the alleviation she can obtain from the treasury of the merits of Jesus and His Saints. The Queen of Heaven holds sway over that prison where souls are submitted to the purifying flames, that they may be fitted to enter where nought *can* enter *that is defiled*. Revelation confirms the Church's doctrine, that Mary comes to console her suffering children, and to relieve their torments. Although she lends her assistance to all the souls in Purgatory, her greatest joy is that she can quickly lead such as have served her faithfully during life out of its flames, because they who have loved Mary most, must necessarily have loved God most, and served Him best. The prayers of the Blessed Virgin for the suffering souls are like a refreshing rain, which tempers the ardour of the flames. In speaking to Saint Bridget, she said : I am truly the Mother

of all the souls in Purgatory, for the pains they should endure in order to satisfy the Divine justice are continually lessened by my intercession. . . . If we have worn the livery of our beloved Mistress, and leave the world in a state of grace, having observed especially the obligation to maintain perfect chastity, her promise will surely be accomplished : that she will deliver us on the Saturday after our death, from Purgatory, by her intercession with God on our behalf.

II. POINT.

Mary conducts her servants to Heaven.

Eternal death is the portion of all those who have not the sign of God on their foreheads, but the remnant *shall be saved, yet so as by fire*. And how many of these also would have perished everlastingly, had not Mary pleaded for them. "All who have confided in her protection," says Saint Bonaventure, "will sooner or later see the gates of Heaven open to receive them, for in knowing her, we know the way towards eternal life. . . . Devotion to the Blessed Virgin has been aptly termed the 'Key of Paradise'." She herself prophetically declared that *all generations would call her blessed*, and with how great reason ! for by her instrumentality the elect of every age obtain eternal blessedness. Mary fulfilled the Will of God so entirely, that her perfect acts of virtue formed a ladder which reaches from earth to Heaven. By this the Incarnate Word descended to inhabit *His own Tabernacle, which the Most High had sanctified* ; by means of her assistance, which in consequence of her merits she is empowered to afford to man, we may ascend from earth to Heaven. The highest contemplation cannot do justice to Mary's power with God ; its influence ends not when the

soul takes its flight to the unseen world. *Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death,* we continually pray; knowing that if she has us under her care, and intercedes for us up to the last moment of our lives, she will not forget our poor souls during that interval of hours or days, perhaps of years, when we shall need her good offices to ameliorate the suffering of temporary separation from the family of Heaven—the agony of being for a while deprived of the joy of seeing the Face of God. And when the moment of release is at hand, surely Mary is awaiting the now pure and happy soul, to conduct it into the Presence of her Son. To which end of all pain, and beginning of endless happiness, guide us all, O Mother of Jesus!

COLLOQUY.

O Mary, thou didst find grace with God, Who preserved thee from original sin, and caused thee to conceive and bring forth the Incarnate Word! These marvellous graces thou hast received, not for thyself alone, but for my sake also, may I not say? since by thy perfect correspondence therewith, thou hast merited to obtain for me, and all thy children, a share in thine own blessedness of being united to Jesus. Assist me in all my necessities, protect me in this life, and if my entrance into Heaven be delayed, oh then, forsake me not, but intercede for my release from Purgatory according to thy promise, and lead me into the Presence of Jesus.

RESOLUTION.

To ask Mary constantly to help me in gaining merits here, so that I may after death quickly enter Heaven.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

There shall not enter into Heaven anything defiled.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

First Saturday in August.**Saint Mary of the Snow.**

Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in Thee.—CANT. IV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Mary in Heaven, surpassing all the Saints by the dazzling splendour of her glory.

II. PRELUDE.

O Mary, purest of all Virgins, give us grace to imitate in thee the angelic virtue, of which the snow that fell miraculously, is an emblem.

I. POINT.

By a fall of snow Mary miraculously indicated the spot, where she would have a Church erected in her honour.

We carry our thoughts back to-day to the miraculous manner in which the Immaculate Mother of God made known her wishes to her faithful servants, by the appearance of *snow in the time of harvest*. We may well account them happy who receive from her direct communications, and hear the actual expression of her desires ; but are we as known careful as we ought to be, in observing the indication of her wishes with regard to ourselves ? On the occasion of her appearing in a dream to Pope Liberius and others, she left them in no doubt as to the spot on which a Church to her honour should be raised, it being plainly pointed out by the miraculous snow which covered it. This express desire on the part of our Lady has produced numberless Churches, Oratories and Altars to be raised to her honour ; and who that loves her, can find it, aught but just and right, that to the Queen of Heaven and earth should be rendered this tribute of veneration and praise, which is so justly her due ? If we cannot contribute to the building of material Temples and Altars for the increase of God's glory and her honour, at least we can please her by adorning our hearts—the temples of the Holy Ghost—with the virtues she loves best. By this means we shall be more perfectly built up, *a spiritual house*, from which will be more constantly rising the praises of Mary—the sincerest homage of our grateful love. Are we engaged in this work for her sake ? If so, we shall become the truer Spouses of her Dear Son.

II. POINT.

The purity of Mary was symbolised by the snow.

As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to him that sent him, for he refresheth his soul.

The consideration of the holy purity, the spotless innocence of Mary is indeed refreshing to the soul ; it has the effect of reviving its energies, and awakening it from its languishing condition, occasioned by spiritual drought. The purity of the Blessed Virgin surpasses in dazzling beauty the whiteness of snow—so aptly chosen to symbolise that celestial virtue, as it appears, in all its unsullied freshness, in her. Let us exalt Mary on account of her inviolable chastity, not only by our words, but still more effectively by the unvarying practice of this virtue, in thought, word, and deed. Her perfect exercise of it rendered it possible for the Incarnate Word to come into this world, *for He did not abhor the Virgin's womb* : to her virginal purity we owe our hope of salvation. Well may we appeal to her protection against the enemy who spreads his snares on every side, to entice us to evil. Let us thank God for the perfect example He gives us in the Mother of His Son ; and beg Him to accede to her desires on our behalf—that we may be preserved chaste both in body and mind—free from all levity, want of modesty, and sensuality : or if we have grievously offended Him and lost baptismal innocence—that we may *cease to do perversely and learn to do well* ; so that our souls being cleansed in the Precious Blood, may again *be made white as snow*. O Mary, by thy intercession, obtain for us, *that our whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

COLLOQUY.

O Virgin of virgins ! O Mother most chaste ! may I daily increase in love and confidence towards thee, by studying thy incomparable virtues, and having recourse to thy maternal protection in the hour of danger. I dedicate myself to thee. Do thou help me ever to make the temple

of my heart the abode of chastity, so that God may visit it, and be pleased to dwell therein. I praise and exalt thee, O Mother inviolate ! because thou wert deemed worthy to be the tabernacle of Him *in Whose sight even the heavens are not pure.*

RESOLUTION.

To obey Mary's injunctions.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Let us rise up and build.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Second Saturday in August.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord : or, who shall stand in His holy place ? The innocent in hands, and clean of heart.—PSALM XXIII.

I. PRELUDE.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary ! we desire that our hearts become more like thee. Obtain from Thy Dear Son that they may participate in thine own ardent love for God.

I. POINT.

The Heart of Mary was consecrated once and for ever to God.

All such as are faithful members of the Church, *offer up*, as Saint Peter expresses it, *spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*. They offer the sacrifice of a humble, contrite heart—the sacrifice of obedience to the Divine law—the sacrifice of continual praise. But the oblations of the just, of the greatest Saints, could never be so perfect as was the entire oblation made by Mary. There was no holding back any part of the holocaust she presented before the Lord. On this account how deeply should we venerate her Immaculate Heart, consecrated for ever to God as a Victim of purest love. Hence It is worthy to be honoured and loved by Angels as well as by men; and more! it is honoured and loved by the Most August Trinity. It beats in union with the Sacred Heart of her Divine Son: we cannot dissociate the one from the other in our thoughts. How unparalleled the sympathy which on earth existed, and in Heaven exists between them! the sympathy of the love of sacrifice—the sympathy of desire to attract souls along the way of perfection, to their eternal Home. “May the Divine Heart of Jesus, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary be always, and in all places acknowledged, praised, loved, and faithfully honoured and glorified.”

II. POINT.

The powerful assistance we may gain by having recourse to the Heart of Mary.

By the consecration of our own lives to the imitating of the Life of Jesus, our Heavenly Spouse, we are called upon to glorify Him by winning souls from the power of His enemies; to make compensation as far as we can, for the ingratitude of the greater part of mankind. We have to fulfil functions which demand the exercise of many great virtues, and establish a claim to the especial assistance of our celestial Patrons. We know for our consolation, that Mary, with all the love of her maternal Heart, is ever watching carefully over her devoted children. We stand in need so continually of an intercessor with Him, *Whose eyes are too pure to look upon evil*; let us then, with all humility, beseech His holy Mother and ours, to pray unto the Lord our God for us. The Church teaches us by Her doctrine that as we go to the Father through the Heart of Jesus, so we may draw near to the Saviour through the Heart of Mary. No intercession save His own is so effectual as that of the holy Mother of Jesus; and to ensure it we have but to tell her with child-like trust, how much we need it. As it has been so beautifully expressed: whenever we say "Mary," Mary says "God"; and as our prayer: *Mary, pray for us*, reaches her, she within the veil of the glory of the Beatific Vision pleads our cause; *Eternal Son, have mercy on them*. Through her therefore shall we not seek access to the Most High? in her repose our hope of obtaining all the graces necessary to eternal salvation?

COLLOQUY.

O Mary, communicate to my heart the holy sentiments of thine own, that it may be also entirely consecrated to God,—ever faithful to thy Beloved Son, devoted to His service, His love, His glory,—full of zeal and charity for the

salvation of souls. My Mother, let me rest my thoughts in thy pure heart, in moments of trial and difficulty. Obtain for me the grace to make a holy use of every opportunity of sacrificing myself, and so please God by imitating thee as thou didst imitate Jesus.

RESOLUTION.

To imitate the virtues of Mary; and especially during this month, her purity of heart.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He that loveth her, loveth life.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Third Saturday in August.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

I will look towards the Lord, I will wait for God, my Saviour; My God will hear my voice. I shall arise when I sit in the darkness: the Lord is my light.—MICH. VII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Mary being transported by the hands of Angels, from this lower world into the bright splendour of Heaven.

II. PRELUDE.

O Mother of Fair Love ! obtain for us that we may live and die in God's grace, and under thy protection ; having celebrated thy triumph here, may we one day rejoice together with thee in the glory of Heaven.

I. POINT.

The death of Mary was a sacrifice of unparalleled merit.

The death of man is at the same time both a punishment and a sacrifice : it is the satisfaction demanded by God of us for sin ; it also gives us an opportunity of offering our lives to Him as a holocaust. Our Divine Saviour, *being a partaker of flesh and blood*, devoted Himself to die, that *through death He might destroy him who had the empire of death*. And *Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many*. Precious in the sight of the Lord not only was the death of the Saint of saints ; but the death of each one of these is dear to God — being a sacrifice pleasing to Himself. We may gain by this consideration, at least a faint idea of the excellence of the sacrifice of Mary's life. She offered it in her humility—thinking of her Creator : in her charity—thinking of mankind. It was fitting that the Mother of the Saviour should, in the hour of death, resemble Him. Her humility, which during her life had veiled her soul from the least effects of ostentation, doubtless inspired her, in that supreme moment, to make an act of complete self-annihilation, in recognition of the sovereign power of God ; desiring by this to glorify Him, and acknowledge Him as the Only Immortal Being. And on the side of charity, she would, in submitting to die, be to us her children, in the hour of our

death, a support and consolation. . . . Her love towards God was also strongly evinced. The first Eve brought death into the world by her failure in humility and obedience ; the second Eve paid the penalty incurred by the first, in the spirit of divine charity,—thus proclaiming the infinite superiority of her Creator, and presenting to Him a perfect sacrifice of obedience. By thy most holy death, O Virgin-Mother, obtain for us resignation when God asks the sacrifice of our lives : following thy example may we offer it gladly and lovingly, to His greater honour and glory.

II. POINT.

The triumph of Mary in Heaven.

The Mystical Ark of grace, within which had reposed the Mediator of the new covenant, was not destined by God to remain on earth. Elias had been carried up from it, in a fiery chariot—Jesus Christ had ascended to Heaven on the clouds—Mary is assumed thither by Angels, and enters it *leaning on her Beloved*. She is welcomed with acclamations, and with the reverence due to the Mother of the Eternal King. He places her upon a radiant throne, above the Cherubim and Seraphim, and all that is not God. The August Trinity receives her, and bestows on her a glorious crown ; and invests her with her prerogatives as Queen of Heaven and earth, as Mediatrix of the human race, and Dispenser of the celestial gifts of grace. *Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee*. This is the Maiden-Mother of Nazareth ! *God hath regarded the humility of His Hand-maid, and hath done great things in her*. And can our hearts remain insensible, as we contemplate the triumphant Assumption of Mary ? Do they not share in

the Angels' joy, as we think of her exaltation to-day ? and anticipate with delight the happiness of seeing her before long, and praising her for all she has done on behalf of each one of us. Are we zealously promoting the glory of Jesus, in and by Mary ? and striving so to serve her now, that when the hour of sacrificing our life to our Creator shall arrive, the remembrance of her example may sustain, and her intercession strengthen us.

COLLOQUY.

I thank Thee again and again, O God Most High, for the privileges Thou hast bestowed on Mary ; and the glory wherewith Thou hast crowned all Thy gifts in her ! I lay at thy feet, O my Mother, my offerings of love and veneration. I am happy in thy happiness, and unite myself with all the blessed in Heaven in extolling thy greatness. Thy humility and thy love are the cause of thy sublime elevation, in the golden City of the Heavenly King—thy Son ! Help me also to attain to a participation in thy bliss, by the exercise of thy virtues. Pray for me to-day, O Mary, as I contemplate thy glorious Assumption.

RESOLUTION.

To re-animate myself in the exercise of Mary's virtues, by the recollection of her glory in Heaven.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Come, my lips, and wide proclaim ; the Blessed Virgin's spotless fame !

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Fourth Saturday in August.

Mary's Coronation in Heaven.

On her head a crown of twelve stars.—APOC. XII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine we see Jesus in the act of crowning His beloved Mother as Queen of Heaven.

II. PRELUDE.

O Mother of Fair Love ! obtain for us that we may live and die in God's grace, under thy protection : having celebrated thy triumph here, may we one day rejoice together with thee in the glory of Heaven.

I. POINT.

Mary, one of Adam's race, is crowned Queen of the Angels and of men.

All the Saints reign with God : each one of the inhabitants of Heaven is to be the eternal possessor of a kingdom. But Mary is Queen over all ; from the hands of God she received her royal insignia, on that day when she took her place beside her Son in the realms of bliss. She is exalted above the Angels because her merits, her dignity, her authority, renders her superior to them. Mary's purity excels theirs ; indeed, as Saint Bernard asks, "could even angelic

purity presume to compare itself with that Virginity, which was worthy to fulfil its destiny as the Sanctuary of the Holy Ghost, and the Shrine of the Son of God?" And to her actual purity our Lady united incomparable merits, which the Angels are incapable of acquiring: merits which surpassed in excellence and in number those of all other creatures, taken together. Her dignity as Mother of God!—what intelligence can grasp its sublimity? The Blessed Virgin presents the claims of the human race to her Son with supreme confidence. He had not taken upon Him the nature of Angels: she through whom He took upon Himself the nature of man, is of necessity therefore exalted above them all. The close relationship the holy Virgin had contracted with the Most High, places between herself and the ministering spirits an infinite distance. Lastly: the authority possessed by Mary is such, that the privilege accorded to the Angels of calling her their Queen, contributes immeasurably to their own glory. That daughter of Adam's race, who was elected by God to be *the woman who should bruise the serpent's head*—the Mother of the Saviour of mankind—now *appears in Heaven clothed with the sun, the moon beneath her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars*. What regalia can equal thine, O Mary!

II. POINT.

Mary, ever Virgin, is crowned as the Mother of all men.

The name of Mother was bestowed on Mary by God the Son: it has been justly merited—divinely conferred—faithfully borne. She who was the Mother—most true, most worthy—of our Divine Head, is she not also the Mother of us His members? As soon as she conceived

the Son of God, she became the second Eve ; because, as Saint Bernardine says, "the life of grace was transmitted to us by her, as natural life was communicated to us by the first Eve". Mary brought us forth in the midst of bitter pain, in the death-hour of her Son. In Heaven, her title of Mother of men, given her when on earth, has not been taken away—rather it is there that she accomplishes the obligations, laid on her by this title. *The gifts of God are without repentance.* He withdraws not those once conferred, unless it be on account of the actual demerits of the recipients ; therefore *Mary's part could never be taken from her.* Can a Mother forget her children ? Can Mary ever cease to think of us ? Surely not ! She makes her dignity as Mother of Jesus to be subservient to our needs ; and in the midst of her glory she remembers those words of eternal significance : *Behold thy son, Behold thy mother.* And now faithfully does she fulfil her maternal duties ; her clemency and her power are being constantly used to contribute to our advantage. Her compassion, her attentiveness to our petitions never fail ; her love for us surpasses that of the tenderest mother. She looks down to earth with maternal solicitude upon us, her children—and then towards Jesus, her Divine Son, to plead as only such a Mother can, for us all. Let us thank God continually for permitting us to avail ourselves of the happy privilege, of addressing the Queen of Heaven by the title of Mother.

COLLOQUY.

With the whole Church I salute thee to-day, O Mary, as Queen of Heaven ! God has invested thee with royal dignity and marvellous powers. Thou art resplendent in thy glory, thou art exalted above all the works of the

Creator's Hands. The sun serves thee as a mantle, the moon is thy footstool, and the stars offer their brilliant radiancy to form thy crown. The Angels salute thee as their Sovereign, the Saints extol thee as the Immaculate Virgin; Jesus turns to thee, and calls thee Mother. Dare I then address thee by this same title? Yes, because thy Son has bidden me do so. Mary, Queen of Heaven, my Mother! I greet thee on the occasion of thy coronation, and present again my petition: pray for and assist me, thy child, now and at the hour of my death.

RESOLUTION.

To think oftener of the maternal love of Mary, and so encourage myself to practise her virtues.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

My abode is in the full assembly of the Saints.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Fifth Saturday in August.**The holy Heart of Mary.**

The Most High hath sanctified His own Tabernacle: God is in the midst thereof.—PSALM XLV.

I. PRELUDE.

We think of the sanctity of the Immaculate Heart of our dear Mother, because *God is in the midst thereof*.

II. PRELUDE.

O holy Heart of Mary! would that our hearts resembled thee more. Ask of Jesus grace for us, that we may practise thy virtues, and especially that ardent love for God which consumed thee.

I. POINT.

The heavenly treasures laid up in Mary's Heart.

If we desire to know the secrets of Mary's Heart, to understand somewhat of the treasures of grace and of virtue which it has ever possessed, we must ask of *God, Who is in the midst thereof*, to open before our eyes this fair Sanctuary, and to unveil to us the perfections which it encloses. He alone can fully comprehend the excellence which is hidden there. Chosen to be the Shrine of the Deity, it was adorned by the Most High Himself with all the gifts of nature and of grace: it was set apart as a Vessel of honour to contain the Heart of Jesus—the Mirror wherein should be reflected the pure rays of the Sun of Justice. How much we should love and venerate this sacred Abode of God's Love! How zealously ought we to seek to procure for it greater honour! With what confidence may we not have recourse to it in all our needs! But chiefly we should strive to make our hearts conformable to Mary's heart, thus to glorify God's gifts in us. In having chosen us also, to be the temples of His Good Spirit, He manifests His desire that we should share in our

Lady's privileges, at least in some degree. Let us then ask her to obtain for us, whatever be the respective calling of each one, the great grace of loving God so ardently, that our hearts may be entirely possessed by Him, in time and for eternity.

II. POINT.

The Heart of Mary can help us to correspond with the designs of God in our regard.

All the members of the Church are called upon to bear the love of Jesus in their hearts, to copy His Life, to obey His precepts: by their conduct to uphold His doctrines, by their words to proclaim His goodness. They should make it their object in life to strengthen His cause, to repair the injuries done to His Sacred Heart, by such as are ungrateful, and despise His love. We have then to accomplish a life-long mission; and thankfully should we accept the help of Mary. Her Heart so fully appreciates all our difficulties, and sympathises so completely with us in our longings to acquit ourselves aright of our daily, but sublime duties. With all the devotion of her loving Heart she consecrated her life on earth to God, and she still manifests her Heart's devotedness to Him by procuring the graces of faithfulness, and perseverance in His service for us, whose work is not yet over, whose crown is not yet won. What can retard our progress in virtue and sanctity—what can prove an obstacle to our attainment of a high degree of glory hereafter, if we invoke with confidence the compassionating Heart of our Dear Mother? Whilst we testify our gratitude for her unwearied care, her unflinching protection, let us offer to her acts of reparation for all the outrages—said, and done, and thought—by which men would dishonour her whom God

has honoured above every other creature. May we neglect no means of obtaining for thee the homage which is thy due, O Mother of God! We beseech thee, accept the offering of our hearts, and our promise to make thy Immaculate Heart yet more and more the object of our veneration and our love.

COLLOQUY.

I delight, O my Mother, in tracing the resemblance between thy pure Heart and that of thy Divine Son. Thine appears to me to be the counterpart of His. Immaculate from the first moment of thy existence, thou didst faithfully copy the virtues of the Sacred Heart. How great is the similarity! Would that my heart were in some degree like thine, so that I might be more pleasing to Jesus. Communicate to me thine own ardent love for God, in which lies the secret of thy faithfulness—thy perfection—thy glory.

RESOLUTION.

To have recourse to the pure Heart of Mary for help and encouragement.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

The Most High hath sanctified His own Tabernacle.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

First Saturday in September.

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

He that made me rested in my tabernacle, and He said to me: let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thy inheritance in Israel, and take root in my elect."—ECCLES. XXIV.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us imagine that we see the infant Mary on the day of her nativity: her Divine Creator looks down from Heaven upon her with complacency; and the Angels behold a child of Adam, free from the taint of original sin.

II. PRELUDE.

O Blessed Virgin, may we worthily honour thee in the mystery of thy Nativity, by resolving to lead a new life more in accordance with thine own, which produced only fruits of holiness.

I. POINT.

The prerogatives which distinguished the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The prerogatives which distinguished the Blessed Virgin Mary from all other creatures, are in true relation to the place she held in the Heart of God. They were the consequence not only of her eminent, unparalleled sanctity, but of her eternal predestination to be the Mother of the Saviour of mankind. According to the mystic meaning of

the words of Holy Scripture, which the Church applies to her, Mary sprang into existence in the Bosom of God before the universe was created. *I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures*; for by reason of her Immaculate Conception, Mary was ordained to be a creature distinct from every other. We see in her the most perfect of all perfected beings: with regard to holiness she was by nature, in her nativity, far in advance of what other Saints have been at the close of their mortal career—their period of probation. None have there ever been on whom God has conferred such gifts of sanctity, and supernatural virtues: none have been equal to her in wisdom, none have manifested with so much sublimity the wonders of His power and goodness. And who can doubt that the rising of this Star (foretold by the prophets, pre-figured under various types, looked-for by God's chosen people during so many centuries) filled Heaven with rejoicing, and shed a soft radiance of happiness over the earth. Well may Heaven and earth be glad to-day, and the vast expanse of ocean exalt, because the Creator of all things hath given to the universe its Queen! How great, how wonderful, how happy is thy destiny, O Mary! thy Nativity brings gladness to the human race! for our salvation art thou born to-day! Thanks be to Him, Who hath decreed *that in the multitude of the elect Mary shall have praise; and among the blessed, she shall be blessed.*

II. POINT.

Mary is the most perfect of all pure beings.

Happy art thou, O holy Virgin Mary, and worthy of all praise; because from thee arose the Sun of Righteousness,

Christ, our God. No other creature, however pure, however fair, has been chosen by God, but Mary only, directly to fulfil His highest designs, to accomplish His noblest and sublimest purposes. Her election to be God's co-adjutrix, surpasses in excellence that of all the predestined. Saint Bernard exclaims: "O Blessed Virgin! thou art peerless as the sun—the dearest delight of the Most Holy Trinity—thou art the grandest result of the eternal counsels of the Three Divine Persons. . . . Thou art the Paradise of God which has produced the Tree of Life, that confers immortality on those who taste its fruit. . . . Thou art the mysterious Eden, in which flourishes the unfading flower of God's good pleasure, on which ever rests the sunshine of His favour." We unite with the Angels in their admiration of thee, O Mary, we render thanks for the marvellous graces bestowed on thee! thy Nativity is the cause of our gladness! Who can conceive in any adequate degree the individual effects of thy birth on each one of us? *Let us indeed celebrate with joy the Nativity of the Blessed Mary, that she may intercede for us to the Lord Jesus Christ.*

COLLOQUY.

I hail thee, O Birthday of our Lady! Throughout the whole world those who love her, are turning their thoughts to the home of Saint Anne to-day, and saying: *Let us keep the Feast of the most noble Nativity of the glorious Virgin Mary, who both attained to the dignity of a mother, and withal lost not her virgin purity.* O Virgin-Mother of Jesus, I rejoice with all those who rejoice in thee, and with thee; and beseech thee to bestow on me a special blessing in memory of the dawning of that day, which has brought such joy and happiness to me.

RESOLUTION.

To begin a new life, in which to practise better the virtues dear to Mary.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

My memory is unto everlasting generations.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Second Saturday in September.

The Sacred Name of Mary.

And the Virgin's Name was Mary.—S. LUKE. I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves the Holy Trinity speaking of Mary by name, in Heaven : and the Angel Gabriel addressing her by it on earth.

II. PRELUDE.

May we be sensible of the effects in Heaven and on earth of thy name, O Mary ; and invoke it often with love and confidence.

I. POINT.

The holy name of Mary is worthy of our reverence.

The name Mary, decreed by God from all eternity, to be that of the Mother of His Son, signifies Queen or Mistress. It is a name of power and of greatness, which causes hell to tremble, puts the devils to flight, commands on earth the respect of the faithful, and in Heaven the veneration of the Angels. It bespeaks also clemency and love—fulness of grace—and gives us to understand these two consoling truths : that Mary, replenished with virtues and merits has power over the heart of God ; and that having received fulness of grace from Him, she has been appointed the Dispenser of it to all who have recourse to her. Her name has also a further meaning : as “Star of the Sea,” Mary guides us amid the stormy tempests by which we are tossed on the waves of this life. When the winds of temptation arise, and drive across our path the clouds of discouragement and distrust, if we look up to Mary we shall discover light by which to direct our course ; and its sweet shining will afford us hope and consolation. It will remind us that she is the Mother of Mercy, and that if through our infidelities we have obliged the Sun of Justice to hide from us the brightness of His Face, the soft rays of Mary’s mercy will excite in us sentiments of contrition, and hope of pardon. O Mary ! may thy beloved Name be always on our lips and in our hearts, in union with that of Jesus ! be there during this life of peril and tribulation ! be there especially in that awful moment which is to decide our fate for all eternity.

II. POINT.

Mary’s name is to be loved by all Christians.

The name of Mary has been ever cherished by the Church: it is associated with that of her Son in all the commemorations of the events of His Life. The Saints have in all ages testified their love for the name of their Dear Lord's Mother. By it the blessed in Heaven recognise their Queen, the just on earth their protector, the demons their invincible opponent. It speaks to us of sovereignty, power, triumph: of mercy, love, peace: of prayer, contemplation, praise. How sweet, how glorious a name! As Saint Bernard says: "in all our dangers, our doubts, our afflictions, we should think of, and invoke Mary. Being at one and the same time the Mother of the Great King, our Judge, and the Mother of Mercy with regard to us her children, she negotiates with readiness and success the great business of our salvation." Under the shadow of the protection of her great name we place ourselves anew to-day. O Jesus! may we indeed revere and love our Lady's name; it reminds us of Thee, leads us to Thee, and obtains great graces from Thee. We will invoke it in the hour of need, derive consolation from it in all our trials, and hope also, when encompassed by the clouds of desolation, or when in the midst of the shadow of death. As thou art, O Mary, *blessed amongst women*, because thou art the Mother of God, so also thy name is blessed wherever the Name of thy Son is known and loved.

COLLOQUY.

Sweet name of Mary! It recalls her to my mind, who was conceived without sin—who heard the Angel's salutation—Who held Jesus in her arms, and pressed Him to her heart—who stood by His Cross on Calvary—who saw Him ascend to Heaven—who followed Him there—who is seated

at His Right Hand—the Queen of Heaven and earth!
 Jesus and Mary! ever united in my memory and in my love,
 may thy Names be on my lips (like the olive branch carried
 by the dove) when my soul shall take its flight to the Ark of
 eternal Security, the Home of unending Rest.

RESOLUTION.

To revere and love Mary's name yet more than I have
 done hitherto.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Hail Mary! full of grace.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

Third Saturday in September.

The Seven Dolours of our Lady.

Thy own soul a sword shall pierce.—S. LUKE II.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us recal to mind the seven Sorrows of the Mother of
 God.

II. PRELUDE.

O Mary, Queen of Martyrs, may we never be insensible
 to thy sorrows; but remembering that, it was sin which

caused them, may we henceforth be more careful to avoid aught that might grieve thee.

I. POINT.

The Sorrows of Mary.

O Mary, we compassionate the sorrow that oppressed thee when Simeon's sad prophecy fell upon thine ear—when thou hadst to fly with the Divine Infant to Egypt—when thou didst fear to have lost the Holy Child! We sympathise in thy grief as thou didst meet Jesus bearing His Cross—as thou didst see His last Agony—how His Body was lacerated and disfigured—as thou didst witness His being laid in the Tomb; and we can but exclaim: *To what shall we compare thee? or to what shall we liken thee, O Daughter of Jerusalem? to what shall we equal thee that we may comfort thee, O virgin-Daughter of Sion?* As thy crowning sorrows were endured on Mount Calvary, thither will we now accompany thee: and contemplate beside thee, the Death of Thy Beloved, and ours. Thou art, O Mary, truly crucified with Him—thine own heart is indeed pierced with the sword of sorrow. Thou dost feel in thy soul the very sufferings Jesus is experiencing in His Body.—What a martyrdom! to behold His dying Agony, and find it impossible to spare Him one pang! Thou wouldst fain die with Him, but the mystic number of thy Dolours is not yet complete. Thou must watch the inflicting of the Wound in the Sacred Heart, and in thine arms receive the Dead Body of thy Son; and then consign It to the darkness of the Sepulchre. Never, O most sorrowful Mother, will we be unmindful of the share we have had, in causing thee thus to suffer: we will stand beneath the Cross, and patiently bear the humiliations and trials God may

deign to send us, in the spirit of penance, reparation and love ; so that we may also stand near thee at the Right Hand of Him Who maketh the grace of suffering to issue in glory. *If we suffer we shall also reign with Jesus.*

II. POINT.

The virtues practised by Mary at the Foot of the Cross, are a life-long lesson.

It is in the midst of great suffering that the greatest virtues are practised. Those who approach the nearest to the Cross of Jesus Christ are His most faithful friends ;—thus His holy Mother reflected so perfectly in herself the image of Jesus Crucified. As she gave her consent to the mystery of the Incarnation, with a faith in God which drew forth the praise of her cousin Elizabeth : *Blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord*, so at the close of the earthly Life of Jesus she acquiesced, with marvellous resignation, to the designs of God, in each separate suffering which He had to bear on our account : *For He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins*. Like a rock in the midst of the waves of the sea of destruction Mary stood firm—their violence could not shake her confidence in God. Neither the sight of her Son's Death, nor the fury of men, nor the rage of the demons could lessen her courage, nor disturb the working of the holy influences of the Blessed Spirit in the inner recesses of that true Mother's heart. Superior to the excess of grief which filled her soul to overflowing, she kept the silence of adoration and of submission. She did not desire that her sorrows should cease, since they rendered her more

like Jesus: she would not by one wish, put a limit to her affliction, nor seek sensible consolation, because *He found none to comfort Him*. Her bearing was full of quiet gentleness and calm resolution; she stood and gazed lovingly towards her Divine Son, united her sacrifice to His, and willingly immolated herself with Him for the salvation of the world. . . . If we stand in need of patience in suffering, and courage to bear it, if the spirit of resignation, and the strong resolve to conform our will entirely to God's most holy Will, form little or no part of the characteristics of our faith in Him, let us appeal to Mary's help, that for the sake of her merits in union with those of Jesus, God may be pleased to give us grace to imitate her virtues as exemplified in her Dolours.

COLLOQUY.

O Queen of Martyrs! may I ask for a share in your martyrdom of love? If in order to love Jesus perfectly, I should willingly accept a portion of His sufferings, I must indeed beg of thee to obtain for me the grace to use them aright, in a true spirit of trustful resignation. May I love all that comes to me from God!—Love gave the Cross to thee, may It fill me with love. O Mother of Dolours! let me unite my sorrow to thine, with thyself do thou associate me, as thou standest beneath the Cross; that I may die to self, crucify my own will and inclinations, and love Jesus as thou didst love Him.

RESOLUTION.

To practise silence, meekness, and resignation, when encompassed by sorrow and affliction.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

PRAYER.

We fly to Thy patronage.

Fourth Saturday in September.

Our Lady of Mercy.

The Lord God said to the serpent: She shall crush thy head.
—GENESIS III.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Mary full of power and majesty; formidable to Satan as an "Army set in battle-array".

II. PRELUDE.

O Mary, my Mother! in the combats which we must be ever waging against the powers of hell, be thou our Refuge and Protector.

I. POINT.

Mary preserves the Spouses of her Son from the slavery of the devil.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the only child of Adam's race, who has always maintained an attitude of enmity towards the devil. She alone has perfectly kept God's command, that the serpent should be regarded invariably as a deadly foe. We have all raised the flag of truce at least sometimes, through cowardice or treachery—but Mary, never! It may truly be averred that the prince of wickedness never found even a passive ally in her. In vain *did he lie in wait for her heel*, or seek to cast the shadow of his dominion around her. Therefore it is that she, by her fidelity, has acquired such power over the old serpent, and is able to assist those who seek her assistance in their strife against him. Satan looks upon mankind as his prey, but he cannot succeed in enslaving those around whom Mary has thrown the mantle of her protecting care. Is there one amongst us who would deliberately disdain her assistance? On behalf of us her children, can she not still repel the attempts of this most cruel tyrant to gain dominion over us? She, of herself, is like to an army which, set in battle-array, is ever at our service in all our spiritual combats, if we are true in our allegiance to her, and seek her aid. Do we not act often as if we thought we could manage without it? What manner of pride can that be, which makes us forget we often stand in need of help from every available quarter? Satan still has the desire *to sift each disciple of Jesus as wheat*. Jesus prayed to the Heavenly Father for Saint Peter—let us ask Mary to beseech Him to pray for us also.

II. POINT.

Mary delivers souls from the bondage of the devil.

Our Lady of Mercy not only protects the just from falling victims to Satan's power; she also rescues such as have fallen. It is impossible for a servant of hers to be lost. Saint Anselm thus addresses her: "O Blessed Virgin, as it is impossible that any one who knows thee, and then forgets and despises thee can be saved, so is it impossible that any should perish who turn towards thee, and whom thou regardest with favour". It is on account of this truth that the devil, when he causes a sinner to lose the grace of God, does all that he can to make him lose devotion towards Mary. And as Saint Ephrem remarks: he, her bitter enemy from the beginning, has reason to fear such devotion, "which may be called the letters-patent of enfranchisement from eternal slavery". If therefore those already bound by the chains of sin have recourse to Mary, she will substitute them for others—not such as are degrading, but light and easy; worthy to be carried by man,—those of the love of God. She will exert her power to liberate such as are detained in the prison-house which abuts on the dungeon of eternal damnation. Jesus, the true Redeemer of mankind, has paid our ransom with His Most Precious Blood—and as He derived that Blood from Mary's veins, He has given back to her the whole price He paid for our redemption. "Let us remember," says Saint Augustine, "that if we are strong enough to sell ourselves to the devil—by accepting his bribes—we have not the power to free ourselves from his fetters. We need the helping hand of our Lady of Mercy, the Mother of the Redeemer.

COLLOQUY.

Hail! Queen of Mercy, I know thou art ever ready to help me in my encounters with the infernal foe. I cannot

say that I have always kept my baptismal vow to be his sworn enemy; but I now resolve to avail myself at all times of thy power to protect and deliver me from his cruel tyranny. Thou art my hope in the hour of danger: thy power to crush the forces of hell, is a certain pledge of my salvation. Guide me safely through the enemy's country, and receive me into thy maternal arms, when the battle of life is over.

RESOLUTION.

In temptation to have recourse to our Lady of Mercy.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

She shall crush the serpent's head.

PRAYER.

We fly to thy patronage.

DAYS OF RETREAT.

The Day of Retreat in August.

The close relationship between the Divine Master and His true Disciples.

Jesus said: Who is My mother, and who are My brethren? And stretching forth His Hand towards His Disciples, He said: Behold My mother and My brethren: For whosoever shall do the Will of My Father, That is in Heaven, he is My brother and sister, and mother.—S. MATT. XII.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus being informed that the Blessed Virgin and other of His relatives, were desirous of speaking with Him: He takes this opportunity of declaring that all the faithful belong to His immediate family.

II. PRELUDE.

Make us, O Son of Mary, lovingly to accomplish the duties especially imposed on us by God; to fulfil them at the expense of any mere natural satisfaction, although it be legitimate.

I. POINT.

Jesus teaches religious persons to be on their guard against affection which is too human.

We cannot doubt for a moment the purity of the motive which actuated Mary and other members of His family, in seeking an interview with Jesus: it is indeed because their conduct is so evidently unimpeachable that our Lord avails Himself of this precise circumstance, to show to what a high degree of perfection in the matter of detachment they are called, who are consecrated in an especial manner to the service of God. No claim on His attention at that moment could be higher than that which engrossed it, when the message was delivered to Him: *Thy Mother and Thy brethren seek Thee*. We are told He was yet speaking to the multitudes: He was being closely watched by the Pharisees who were lying in wait to accuse Him. He was in the midst of a public duty, in a direct manner *He was about His Father's business*. He was intent on glorifying Him before the world, by giving open testimony to the truth: *and for this He came into the world*. We learn from His example that we must not leave unfulfilled the duties which appertain distinctly to the particular service God asks of us, for any considerations purely human. When there is a question as to whether we should gratify some natural inclination, or self-denyingly continue some work whereby God's glory is to be directly promoted, we may not hesitate as to the course to be pursued. And this is a fact which should engage especially the attention of Religious. The ties of earthly relationship may no longer bind us, no obstacles arising from affection to our kindred, must be permitted to hinder us from performing exactly the requirements

of our holy estate, nor turn us from seeking that perfection which it exacts. If tempted to listen to nature's sophistry, let us say with the Divine Master: *Who is My mother, and who are My brethren?* We belong to Jesus Christ by the special consecration we have made of ourselves to Him: our duty is as distinctly regulated by obedience as was His, —we cannot fail to know what it is, at every moment of our lives. Can it be that our charity will grow contracted when we leave all for Jesus' Sake? No, rather; like His, it becomes universal! *Whosoever shall do the Will of My Father That is in Heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother.*

II. POINT.

The spiritual relationship which exists between the Son of God and ourselves.

There is no one in the world who has not a right to belong to the family of God: the only, but indispensable condition is, that His Will must be done by each individual member of it: He, as its Head, allots the work to be done, according as He sees fit. Conformity to the holy Will of God therefore, is the virtue which cements our union with Jesus; and spiritualises the relationship existing between all to whom He says: the same *is My mother, and sister, and brother.* We may imagine what an example of patience and humility Mary gave to those who accompanied her, as they waited for the moment when her Son would be able to grant the interview they sought. Mary's love *was not ambitious—sought not her own.* We cannot fail to notice the high appreciation Jesus had for the saintly virtue of His holy Mother, which the Divine Will on this occasion put to the test. Her unvaryingly perfect conformity to that Divine Will called forth

love in its most perfect form—the love of the Best of sons for the best of mothers. To this highest pinnacle of love—rising above all its lesser heights, Jesus lifts our thoughts! This is the summit, on which ever rests the golden light of the Heavenly Father's smile: to reach it should be our aim. If we have our attention fixed on it, it will keep us always looking upwards, and away from the low-lying ground of mere earthly affections, and worldly attractions. Our Lord had before said: *Be you perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect*: now He seems to furnish us with the example of the one who acted upon this precept, as completely as it was possible for any creature to act—the example of His own dear Mother He places before us as the aim of our aspirations. Does this absolute conformity seem too high a virtue for us ever to arrive at? If we do not reach the summit of perfection, at least let God find us as near it as He desires we should be. Mary will help us by her intercession: she wishes us to share with her the graces *which have their fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting*. How do we bear trials of patience? delays? disappointments? answers to our prayers being deferred? Are we truly *sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty?*

COLLOQUY.

Canst Thou, O Jesus, reckon me among those of whom Thou sayest: *Behold My mother, and My brethren!* I know that I am unworthy to be numbered with them, because of my want of perfect conformity to the Will of God. Help me by Thy grace, O Blessed Spirit, to bring every thought, and word, and action into subjection to it; so that I may no longer dishonour my vocation, to be united to Jesus by the closest bonds of affection. Let me put Mary's pure love

for Jesus before me, as the example which I should imitate: not being attached to creatures by any mere natural ties, may I love all in God—and God alone.

RESOLUTION.

To ask for the grace of entire conformity to the holy Will of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Whosoever shall do the Will of My Father That is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Day of Retreat in August.

CONSIDERATIONS.

The danger arising from worldliness.

I. POINT.

The obligation a Religious is under of being separated from the world, in heart and mind.

Those whom God destines to approach the nearest to Himself, He separates unto Himself as a peculiar people. We see this with regard to the priests under the old Law, and in many instances in the history of the Jews. The line of separation between such as are now especially consecrated to God's immediate service, and the generality of Christians, is even more distinctly defined. The Son of God says to such: *I have chosen you out of the world.* We are dedicated by the spiritual force of these words of election, so completely to a life apart from the world, that we could not leave the sanctuary of Religion to mix in the usual occupations of the world without great danger. Is it not profanation to put that which has once been rendered sacred, to ordinary purposes? Religious communities consist of persons who live under stricter laws, higher obligations, and holier engagements than seculars; for they have no functions which in their fulfilment are not regulated by obedience—no other rules beyond those which are framed by charity—no other occupations but works of mercy—the house of the Presence of their Beloved is their sanctuary. . . . But outward barriers alone are not sufficient to guard the religious spirit: to maintain this in all its integrity, they who step within the consecrated circle which it should animate, must determine this within themselves: that they will for ever exclude from their hearts and minds the spirit of worldliness. Many religious Orders have an important work, it is true, to do in the very midst of the world; and they have more need than others to defend themselves by great fidelity and watchfulness, from its snares. When they, who are consecrated to God in holy Religion, adopt the manners and maxims of the world, they may be likened to the children of Israel, who overtrusting of their moral safeguards mingled with the Gentiles and learned their works and

served their idols, and it became a stumbling-block to them. Do we never burn the incense of human respect to the world's idols? Is there not an attempt made sometimes to graft the false opinions of the world on our religious principles? Certain it is that if we accept the world's way of thinking and acting, if we share in its prejudices, its avidity for honour and gain, its ambition for esteem and glory, *if we go disloyally after such inventions, the Lord will be exceedingly angry with His people.* Let us therefore walk warily along that part of duty's path which leads us near the border-land of the world; and borrowing the words of the Psalmist, make them our constant prayer: *Save us, O Lord our God: and gather us from among the nations.*

II. POINT.

The obligations of the world's fashion, and the obligations of the religious Life are incompatible.

Saint Paul, in giving advice to Saint Timothy, advises at the same time all religious persons thus: *Labour as a good soldier of Jesus Christ: No man being a soldier to God, entangleth himself with secular businesses; that he may please Him to Whom he hath engaged himself.* They who have the honour of being enrolled beneath the banner of the Cross, are to be altogether occupied in keeping near their King, fighting against His enemies, and winning fresh glory for Him. But should they forget their high calling, and its responsibilities, and begin to be off their guard, and omit their sacred duties, they will soon be found to be making overtures with the world—often to their ultimate ruin. Let us see if we are losing the time and opportunities God is giving us of doing Him special service, in vain occupations,

or self-imposed secular business? Of this time, of these opportunities, He will require a strict account. Are we bringing into work, so absolutely dedicated to Him, the spirit of dissipation—of slothfulness—negligence—irreverence—profanity? In our daily round of functions both holy and useful, may we hope that we are a cause of edification to others? No temptation is more dangerous than that into which many fall—the fatal temptation of following a bad example. What if we are gaining clients for the world, by ours? Well may these words of our Lord be applied to imperfect, inconsistent, unfaithful Religious: *If then the light that is in thee be darkness: the darkness itself, how great shall it be!* Happy are they whose hearts have been open to receive—that have ever since retained—the grace poured upon them at the moment of their consecration to God! Happy are they who, continually augmenting this grace by corresponding to it, lead a life of antagonism to the world—that is, a life of singleness of purpose, of devotedness to the cause of God, of disinterestedness, of humility, in a word, of unfeigned holiness. Having made our choice between the friendship of the world, and the friendship of the Most High, having elected to enter His service, and consequently not to be in bondage to the world, are we practically remembering that we cannot *serve God and mammon? that no one can have two masters?* We have sworn fealty to Him Who said: *As Thou, O Holy Father! has sent Me into the world, I also have sent My disciples into the world. I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil: They are not of the world, as I am not of the world.* Are we loyal to the Divine Master?

Day of Retreat in September.

On the Religious Vocation.

Two disciples—hearing John the Baptist speak of JESUS, and saying : Behold the Lamb of God—followed Him : And JESUS turning, saith to them : What seek you ? Who said to Him : Master, where dwellest Thou ? He saith to them : Come and see.—S. JOHN I.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us represent to ourselves this first instance of a vocation to the religious life, given by Jesus : the attraction of the grace of predilection—and faithful correspondence to it.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, help us to comprehend the signal favour of receiving a religious vocation ; and enable us to shew our appreciation, by our endeavours to become more worthy of it.

I. POINT.

The gentle power of Jesus attracts souls to follow Him.

Let us notice how unmistakable is the kindness with which the Divine Master attends to the incipient desire of those who seek really to know Him : how powerful is the gentleness shown by Him when He finds true hearts inquiring where they can abide with Him. Jesus wins us by the manifesta-

tion of His spirit of meekness and self-sacrifice : *Behold the Lamb of God*. Seeing that we acknowledge the attractiveness of His Divine perfections, He graciously turns and asks, *What seek you ?* Even at the outset, He would wish us to understand that we should not follow Him aimlessly, doing so from mere impulse : He would have us well consider what our motives are : whether there is vigour in our resolve to accompany the lowly Son of Mary wheresoever He may lead us. To strengthen our purpose, in the wisdom of His love, He asks : *What seek you ?* God respects the free-will of His creatures ; He gives us the power of *choosing the better part*, and we should distinctly know, in entering the religious life, what we are doing. *What seek you ?* Is it esteem, or renown, or freedom from trials and temptations ? Is it continual consolation, or cessation from toil ? None of these are to be expected by such as cast in their lot with Jesus. They have to share in His labours, His weariness, His sufferings ; but the love which has decided their choice, will bear them up through all these, and change sacrifices, made for His Sake, into an offering of praise and glad thankfulness. *What do you seek ?* Jesus has asked of us. As we pursue our way in following Him, let us often ask ourselves : What are we still seeking ?

II. POINT.

Jesus invites us to abide with Him.

The first call to the religious life, when Jesus attracted Andrew and his fellow-disciple to Himself, is similar to each true vocation which since that hour, has drawn His chosen ones away from the world to be His near companions. *Master, where dwellest Thou ?* To each one who asks of

Him : Where is the place of Thy rest? Whither will Thou lead us? *Come and see*, Jesus replies : *I will allure thee by My grace, and will lead thee into the wilderness of interior solitude : and I will speak to thy heart and teach thee in what way thou shalt testify thy love for Me before the Angels, and confess Me before men.* How happy is this life of union with Jesus, union whether of joy or suffering, to which He has invited us ! We live with Him, in His Presence at all times, we follow His example, we receive His advice, we converse with Him *as one is wont to speak to his friend.* Can we ever thank our Dear Lord as we ought for that first grace which inspired us with the thought of leaving all else, to dwell with Him in the holy house of Religion, gave us a love for retreat, and courage to overcome all the obstacles the world sought to interpose? O Jesus, may we seek to know and love Thee better, and ere long do Thou, *Who art the High and the Eminent, That inhabiteth eternity, and Whose Name is Holy ; Who dwelleth in the high and holy place,* bid us enter therein, not to stay with Thee only during the day of a short lifetime, but for ever and ever. *Master ! where dwellest Thou ? Come and see.*

COLLOQUY.

I thank you with all my heart, O my Jesus, for having deigned to call me to a life of union with Thyself. Make me ever to continue faithful to my vocation. *One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.* Happy am I, in that Thou art always with me as my Dearest Friend and Companion ; and because I hope that of Thy great goodness Thou wilt bid me come and see the place

prepared for me in the heavenly Country, where I shall behold Thee as Thou art.

RESOLUTION.

To strive to prove my gratitude for the signal privilege of my vocation.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Master, where dwellest Thou? Come and see.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.

Day of Retreat in September.

CONSIDERATIONS.

Pious Zeal.

I. POINT.

Zeal must be persevering.

God commanded Saint John to write thus to the Bishop of Ephesus: *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil: and thou hast endured for My Name, and hast not fainted:*

But I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first charity. On these words, spoken by the Just Judge of all men, many practically make this comment: Is there so great harm in so slight a relaxation of fervour? Is not this falling away more than counterbalanced by the many virtues just before enumerated? Let us listen to the solemn warning the Apostle adds at the dictation of the Holy Spirit: *Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen: and do penance and do the first works: Or else I will come and remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou do penance.* With this instance before us of the danger of not persevering in the fervour with which we first began to serve God, we shall do well to examine ourselves to-day as to whether our love has increased in ardour, or grown less active. It is not difficult to arrive at a just conclusion in this important matter, because the difference between steady progression and a continual falling back, is perceptible to the most careless scrutiniser. Is our vigilance over the tendency of our desires and affections as great as formerly? We would not willingly admit even the possibility of our finishing our course farther off from perfection than when we began it: we appear to be still working for God, we profess to hate evil, we have no deliberate intention of forsaking our colours, of deserting the cause of Him Who hath called us to follow Him; but all the while may not He Who knoweth the secrets of each heart, *have somewhat against us?* Have we unhappily left our first charity? has our first fervour *gone away like the dew in the morning?* is our zeal for perfection diminishing? If so, let us hear what the Spirit saith: *Be mindful and do penance.* There may be much to be done to regain what we have lost, but our light is not yet put out, thanks be to God! He, in His mercy, is calling us to repentance.

II. POINT.

Apparently slight imperfections may cause great injury to the soul.

We do well constantly to bear in mind the Apostle's advice, given so succinctly and yet with such energy in the text: *Give not place to the devil*: do not make way for him in the slightest degree; he may seek to dislodge us from the position we have gained—ever so little at first, but that little is enough for his purposes, for the moment. Alas! it is to be feared that we do give place to him sometimes; he could not take it, unless we ceded him a foothold by a retrogressive movement on our part. His object is to make us begin to be careless about the avoiding of lesser faults; he knows he could not push back to the edge of the precipice all at once. If as Religious we are not daily taking steps towards that perfection to which our holy estate obliges us, we shall soon begin a backward course—making little account of venial sins. Without much scruple there will be negligence with regard to the performance of our exercises of piety—deviation from truthfulness in speaking and acting—levity of manner—no repugnance to censure others—and a thousand other defects. If we once lose sight of our resolution to refer all to God's honour and glory, how quickly does self-seeking, human respect and its close ally, susceptibility, take the place of the good intention with which we were once so determined to sanctify all our thoughts, words, and actions. Saint Gregory says that if one who by his vocation is called to perfection, thinks that he may save his soul by remaining in imperfection, he will find out that he is mistaken. He has contracted a most grave and life-long

responsibility; an obligation, the sacredness of which we cannot even fully comprehend. If our conscience accuse us of unfaithfulness to this obligation—if *our heart reprehend us* for any wilful venial sin, to *God Who is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things*, must we turn without further delay; and beg of Him to help us by His grace to recover the spoil taken by the devil from us, little by little. To the same end must we invoke the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints. Happy for us *if our heart do not reprehend us: and if we have confidence towards God*, that He has not *somewhat against us*. Let us, whether we have failed in either a greater or lesser degree, renew ourselves in the spirit of our first fervour, beginning again truly to love our Divine Lord *not only in word, but in deed and in truth*. And when the devil harasses us, let us take fresh courage from the promise which followed the warning we have been considering: *To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the tree of Life, which is in the Paradise of God*.

